LIBERALISM

"Denn der Götter Ende
dämmert nun auf;
so werf' ich den Brand
in Walhall's prangende Burg."
-- Götterdämmerung

Studies in Statesmanship

Harry V. Jaffa, Winston S. Churchill Association, General Editor

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LIBERALISM

Harry Neumann

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and
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Statesmanship and Political Philosophy

To my wife

I am grateful to the Earhart Foundation and the John Brown Cook Association for Freedom, both of which helped provide the leisure to complete Liberalism. I want to acknowledge my debt to Alan Heslop, Fred Balitzer and Harry Jaffa.

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Foreword

The publication of Liberalism by Harry Neumann is a mile stone for Studies in Statesmanship, and its General Editor. Professor Neumann and I have given a joint seminar on "Socrates or Nihilism" annually for over a decade. Many of the chapters are offshoots of that seminar -- as is shown by my contribution (Chapter 6). Although our thinking remains at opposite poles of theoretical conviction, I can say that I have learned more about the inner relationship between philosophy and politics from Harry Neumann than from anyone else except Leo Strauss. No one living has so ruthlessly uncovered the divided mind -- the political schizophrenia -- arising from the unconscious (and conscious) nihilism of contemporary Liberalism. No one else has expressed so clearly the murderously political demand of that Liberalism for an end to politics, in a utopian world in which science gratifies every demand for pleasure without any question of the relationship of the pleasant to the good.

Neumann's starting point -- like Leo Strauss's -- is revulsion from and contempt for the failings of the Weimar regime, and the liberalism it represented. Neither of them however believed that Hitler's regime was a predestined outcome of Weimar's liberalism. Nor are the corruptions of Weimar to be compared to the afflictions imposed on us today -- particularly in the universities -- by an endemic moral relativism. Our Founding Fathers -- quoting Montesquieu -- believed that virtue was the principle of republics. When however the virtue, or decency, required of republics is itself looked upon as tyranny, then tyranny -- whether Hitler's, Stalin's, or some other variety-- may be the recourse of those who are the enemies of decency. The return to the Garden of Eden, with no forbidden fruit, is the end demanded by all Liberal politics, of which Marxist Communism is only one subspecies. That is why the present so called victory of liberal democracy over Communism being trumpeted in Washington, London, Paris, etc., is such a delusion. Now that the God of Communism has failed, the God of Liberal democracy will be expected to deliver what Communism failed to deliver. But the

end result -- tyranny -- will be the same in the one case as in the other. That theme is expressed in Neumann's epigraph from the late John Wettergreen.

Neumann is the only one of Leo Strauss's students who, like Strauss, marked the turning point in his career from his reading of Carl Schmitt's Concept of the Political. Although Neumann turned one way, and Strauss another, there are resemblances that transcend this difference in direction. Both are characterized by the greatest moral earnestness. The Jewish contempt for "Epicureanism," of which Strauss speaks in his autobiographical preface -- and which is crucial for understanding Strauss and his entire enterprise -- is also at the root of Neumann's contempt for modern liberalism. Like Strauss, Neumann sees modern Epicureanism as Epicureanism come out of the closet, demanding that all politics be in the service of its demands. Epicureanism in the ancient world was unpolitical and anti-political. In the modern world it is the most virulent form of sectarian and ideological politics.

The world of moral man, the world which sees the human good in its subordination to the laws of nature or of God -- the world Liberalism would abolish -- is the world the Jew characterizes, when he says that "the reward for the fulfillment of the commandment is the commandment." Neumann, as a Nietzschean nihilist, is satisfied that such a command can be willed as much as God willed the creation of the world ex nihilo. Unlike Strauss, he does not think that internal reflection on the intrinsic character of human thought is sufficient evidence "of the true ground of the dignity of the man." He does not say, as did Strauss, that awareness of this dignity enables us "to accept all evils ... in the spirit of good citizens of the city of God." Strauss's interpretation of the fundamental human experience, which I consider the only authentic interpretation of that experience, remains for Neumann an interpretation. As such, it is something, not so much to be believed, as something to be fought for. Nevertheless, Neumann and I agree -- and Strauss I am convinced would agree (see my essay on "Leo Strauss's Churchillian Speech") -- that it should be fought for in any case, since the necessity of morality for human well being, even in a world dominated by modern science, remains unchanged. The discovery of a cure for AIDS would not affect St. Paul's argument against sodomy and lesbianism.

Looking over the field of contemporary Conservatism, we see first the Paleo-cons, who can barely conceal their hatred of the Enlightenment and all its works -- especially those things that have advanced under the banner of equality, like the abolition of slavery and the

emancipation of the Jews. And then there are the Neo-cons (many of them Jews), who think the Enlightenment was a good thing -- not for any reason -- but only because of what it has done for them. Finally, there is Allan Bloom. Neumann's essay on The Closing of the American Mind is a masterly expose of that book's hidden agenda. Neumann reveals what I call Bloom's Willie Sutton complex. Bloom's attack on academic relativism, and his concern for the morals of his students is reminiscent of Willie's anxiety for the morals of bank managers. Willie didn't want to go to all the trouble of breaking open the bank's safe, only to find out that the man with the combination had already emptied it. (In the age of the S&L scandal, this tale takes on added poignancy.) Bloom's conception of philosophy -- or the reason for teaching the Great Books -- is that it encourages skeptical doubt -- and skeptical inquiry -- into the received opinions -- the conventional wisdom -- of one's society. It encourages us to ask -- as Plato's Republic does -- "Is Justice good?" And if so, "For what?" And if so, "For whom?" But such philosophy presupposes a conventional morality to which the student is attached, and which he is being invited to question. If the only opinion that the student brings into the classroom is the opinion that all morality is a matter of opinion -- and that no opinion can be proved superior to any other -- then there really is very little to talk about. Moral relativism, denying that we can know anything about right and wrong, just and unjust, leads only to discussions of what feels best when you do it. Bloom is emphatic that he deplores moral relativism, not in the interest of morality, but in the interest of good classroom discussions about whether morality is good. The question that Neumann raises, is whether good classroom discussions about whether morality is good are really possible, when the highest object in view is the discussion, and not morality itself. Bloom's educational philosophy elevates the Great Books above the moral concerns central, not only to human life itself, but to many of those very books. Neumann questions whether a primary and genuine concern with the moral phenomena is not as indispensable a precondition to the teacher as to the students, in those classrooms in which these books are taught. Neumann is a great teacher because of the primacy for him of the moral and political. Books about moral and political subjects are concerned, as Aristotle says, about "the actions that occur in life." Discussions in political philosophy "start from these and are about these." For those who would use the Great Books well, they must be understood in their service to "the actions that occur in life." In the end, Bloom has contempt for any dogmatism that is not the slave and servant of his skepticism. For Neumann, this ver-

sion of Socratic skepticism can only end -- as it did in Aristophanes' Clouds, as it did in Weimar Germany -- in the burning down of the "phrontisterion," the House of Socrates.

-- *Harry V. Jaffa*
General Editor
Studies in Statesmanship
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Introduction

In 1970 I believed that Tocqueville's soft despotism was the aim of the bureaucratizers. However today we cannot be so optimistic as was possible in 1970. Today's bureaucratizers are not soft despots at all. The political use of criminal law, such as began during the Watergate scandals and has begun to be regularized during the Reagan administration, is characteristic of tyranny -- not Tocqueville's 'new', 'soft' one, but a harsh one ... To the carrot -- spending unlimited by law -- the legislature has added the stick -- the penalties of the criminal law. [1]

Tocqueville's democratic despotism does not use criminal penalties ... He did not expect democratic leaders to be tyrants, but rather schoolmasters. On the evidence of the twentieth century alone, he was drastically wrong. Democracies -- in Tocqueville's sense of that term -- have proven capable of tyrannies more brutal and more pervasive than anything imagined in previous ages ... It suffices to say that he misevaluated the human desire to rule. This is an error characteristic of modern political science from Machiavelli on: the assumption that human nature (or a part of humanity) is non-political.

-- John Adams Wettergreen [2]

Politics? I don't engage in politics. It disgusts me.

-- Adolf Hitler [3]

The essays in this book reflect a change in my understanding of philosophy and science. The change concerns their relation to politics. I became aware of the crucial role of politics partly through arguments with Harry Jaffa and his best students. The status of politics is at the

heart of their conflict with most of the other prominent students of Leo Strauss. Reflection on this fight has helped to clarify my own views. I came to see that Jaffa's enemies had much more in common with my nihilism or atheism than he did; Jaffa seems to me to be the real heir of Strauss' defense of politics against scientific or nihilist devaluation. As a nihilist, I mean no disrespect when describing Jaffa's enemies as scientific and therefore nihilist. For this brings them closer than Jaffa or Strauss to what I regard as true. The only thing for which I fault them is unwillingness to recognize the atheism or nihilism inherent in their liberalism.

The core of their opposition to Jaffa is their advocacy of philosophy's independence of, and superiority to, moral-political things. They interpret philosophy as the study of being or of the nature of the universe, not as the study of statesmanship.

They view philosophic exotericism as prudent dissembling (of their denigration of politics) before moral-political men. Consequently they reject Jaffa's Strauss interpretation: "I think Strauss's preoccupation with the problem of Socrates in his later years reflects the conviction that the reconstruction of classical political philosophy requires a reliance upon the moral distinctions as the key to the metaphysical distinctions. Political philosophy – meaning thereby first of all moral philosophy – must become the key to philosophy itself. We have access to theoretical wisdom only by taking the moral distinctions with full seriousness. This is very clear in Strauss' marvelous eulogy of Churchill:

> `We have no higher duty, and no more pressing duty than to remind ourselves and our students, of political greatness, human greatness, of the peaks of human excellence. For we are supposed to train ourselves and others in seeing things as they are, and this means above all in seeing their greatness and their misery, their excellence and their vileness ...
>
> `Seeing things as they are' refers to the being of things, their metaphysical reality. Yet that being is seen as goodness ('The Primacy of the Good'). The spectacle of political greatness, human greatness becomes then the ground of philosophy itself, because the philosopher himself looks to this spectacle to contemplate the being of things which become manifest in the spectacle. The great statesman thus brings to light the distinctions which are the ground of theoretical as well as practical philosophy. In Strauss, the moral distinctions become the heart of philosophy. And statesmanship thus itself becomes part of philo-

sophic activity, seen in its wholeness. This is Strauss's answer to Heidegger as well (as Churchill was the answer to Hitler) -- in whom political philosophy finally disappears. If then we see in Heidegger the death of political philosophy (and the death of God, for they are one and the same), in Strauss we may see their resurrection!'"[4]

Characteristic of the position of Jaffa's enemies is the absence of any reference to the political theologian, Carl Schmitt, in the Cropsey History of Political Philosophy which includes sections on Husserl, Strauss, and Heidegger. Strauss considered his Schmitt interpretation indicative of the decisive turn in his career, signaling his condemnation of liberalism's "self-destruction of reason." According to Strauss, Schmitt unsuccessfully attempted to recapture the centrality of politics against its liberal devaluation. Both Schmitt and Strauss despised this denigration of politics as creating "a world of fun, a world devoid of seriousness." A ground for their contempt is cited by Chaninah Maschler: "The astonishingly vivid rhetoric of the essay on Schmitt gives even an innocent American an experience of the appeal of nazi ideology for someone who is made to feel that life is contemptible without whole-souled dedication, but who can no longer take religion seriously."[5]

The inherent illiberalism (anti-liberalism) of politics prevents "a world devoid of seriousness" by compelling men to seriously raise life's most serious question and to fight, and, if necessary, to die for their answer to it. That question is the old Socratic one of what is right or good. When men ask "the question of what is right in earnest, there arises (given the inextricably problematic character of what this question is about) conflict, life and death conflict: by the seriousness of the question of what is right, the political -- the division of the human race into foes and friends -- is justified."[6]

So long as that question remains unanswered or inadequately answered -- so long, that is, as philosophy exists -- "The political, the division of the human race into foes and friends, is justified." That question (What is good?), the illiberal heart both of politics and philosophy, is, therefore responsible for the impossibility of eliminating war. Liberal democracy's goal, life without war, would also be without politics and philosophy. Strauss' effort to show the political theologian, Schmitt, that his defense of war arose from love of philosophy was as unsuccessful as similar efforts by Socrates in regard to Alcibiades or Callicles.

For philosophy, the main battle is between liberalism and illiberalism, philosophy and politics: Is serious questioning of the authorita-

tive values of one's "cave" preferable to un-questioning loyalty? For philosophers, there are only these two alternatives; not, as often is claimed, as many alternatives as there are "philosophers."

On philosophic horizons, this question always is more evident than either answer to it. When either answer, the "philosophic" or the political, the liberal or the illiberal, appears truer philosophy becomes politics. This transformation is responsible for Professors Bloom's [7] advocacy of what he calls the "truth party", "a party, as it were, to go along with the other [political] parties." Bloom wrongly believes that his "truth" party is philosophic and that Socrates founded it. Its being a political faction makes it unphilosophic. As for its claim to be the "truth" party, all political partisans make that claim for their sects! Precisely this distinguishes them from philosophers.

Philosophers are not partisans for philosophy because their never adequately answered question is whether serious questioning of the partisanship closest to one's heart is better than un- flinching loyalty to it. The attempt to be a partisan of philosophy against its moral-political enemies simply transforms philosophy into one of those enemies, that is, it liberalizes philosophy. It thereby creates the problem endemic to intellectuals in liberal democracies. In the preface to his "Has the Restoration of the Sciences and Arts Tended to Purify or Corrupt Morals?", Rousseau notes that these intellectuals advocate "philosophic" freedom today for the same reason that they would have burned philosophers at the stake a few centuries ago: what was politically acceptable then now lacks respectability in liberal democracies! In order to domesticate philosophy, they must present philosophers as members of yet another political ("truth") sect. They require a liberalized, not a political, philosophy.

In the Republic,[8] Socrates illustrates the moral-political man's deep need to domesticate philosophy. He tells the tale of Leontius who, upon coming upon some bodies freshly slaughtered by the public executioner, felt an urge to contemplate the bloody scene. His political passions (moral indignation) were horrified by what to them appeared barbaric craving. When he nevertheless succumbed, his moral outrage was directed against himself. To illustrate the same phenomenon, Socrates also cites a baby's anger when deprived of its toys.

Moral indignation is triggered when what men regard as right and good is threatened or lost (consider Psalm 137). It is the chief reaction of any political ("truth") faction whose members feel their "truth" endangered -- as Leontius' was by his urge to contemplate morally forbidden sights. Leontius' civil war occurred in himself. The same war

occurs potentially, if not actually, in every man and, therefore, in every state and between states. Philosophic or political life always is illiberal and therefore belligerent.

In the Republic[9] Socrates gives the reason for philosophy's belief in war's inevitability and universality. The core of moral-political life, and of the common sense universe presupposed by it, is the drive to get what is good for oneself, to lead a good life. This is, as Nietzsche rightly noted, the chief care of all herd members. This care always is informed by what one's herd considers right and good. Unphilosophic herd members never seriously question their herd's chief orthodoxies about good and evil, although here, as always, conflicting interpretations may lead to fights.

Philosophers, on the other hand, are permeated by the sting of the awareness that they lack an adequate grasp of what good and bad is. Thus they cannot simply join any moral-political ("truth") party. In particular, they cannot join any of the "Truth" parties permitted in their herd. These factions, the conflicting interpretations of their herd's regnant orthodoxy, determine the philosopher's outlook prior to the emergence of philosophic questioning in his soul. Once that questioning surfaces, the main fight is between the need for it and the still powerful need for unquestioning loyalty. Philosophers experience an untenable psychological fight between these two factions in their souls: the crucial (civil) war is between philosophy and politics, liberalism and illiberalism, in the philosopher himself.

In that battle, the philosopher's awareness of his ignorance (of the good) precludes formation of a "truth" party of philosophy against politics. He is not at liberty to raise the banner of truth against his herd needs, although they passionately claim truth for themselves as moral-political men always do. All he can do is seriously question, fully aware that this questioning may be wrong. It is as if Leontius' hankering after morally repulsive sights were aware of its own questionableness, thus making itself all the more vulnerable to his righteous indignation. Indignation always feels righteous, confident of its membership in the party of truth, a luxury which philosophy cannot afford.

Philosophy is not destroyed by that vulnerability because, in the philosopher, both the philosophic and the herd passions are at full strength. Philosophic realization of one's inadequate grasp of what truly is good prevents the victory of either faction. Thus Socrates, in the Republic's Myth of Er, suggests that men who are moral (illiberal) without also being philosophic (liberal) become tyrants, if given the chance.

Similarly when philosophers transform themselves into kings or into members of a "truth" party, "philosophic" tyranny arises.[10]

Earlier in the Republic,[11] Socrates recounts his meeting with old Cephalus. In his youth, Cephalus' craving for unlawful pleasures led to crime. Then his debauchery left no time for what he would call philosophic dialogues. Now, when on the verge of death, he claims an eagerness for such dialogues with Socrates. The infirmity of age killed his capacity for the unlawful pastimes of his youth, thus permitting what he believes to be an openness to philosophy. He fails to perceive that his youthful indiscretions were, in a sense, more philosophic than the "philosophic" openness of his dotage. For those criminal passions implied doubts about the illiberalism dominating his soul.

Instead of encouraging serious questioning sparked by the conflict between liberalism and illiberalism, the illicit drives informing the young Cephalus merely drowned his anti-liberal indignation against them. That indignation then reasserted itself when senility destroyed his capacity to satisfy those cravings. Thus his way, the way of all unphilosophic men, either liberalizes ("philosophizes") illiberalism (politics) as the young Cephalus does; or it politicizes (illiberalizes) liberalism ("philosophy") as the old Cephalus does. Either his liberal or illiberal passions win. Like all non-philosophers, he has no inkling of a soul whose awareness of its inadequate knowledge (of the good) precludes the victory of either liberalism or illiberalism.

In the unphilosophic, serious questioning and moral indignation at it cannot operate at full strength simultaneously. Consequently philosophy is, at best, inconceivable; at worst, repellent, to them. This is the basic reason for philosophic exotericism, the philosopher's inability to be open with moral-political men and with the illiberalism in his own soul, an anti-liberalism nevertheless essential to philosophy. When the unphilosophic embrace "philosophy," they inevitably illiberalize its liberalism or liberalize its illiberalism. Their caricature of philosophy is responsible for pseudo-liberalism, political liberalism.

Philosophers are not liberals for honest liberalism rejects the illiberal core of both philosophy and politics, the faith in a non-arbitrary, eternal good or god. Philosophy's goal is apprehension of the good. Liberalism is radically unphilosophic precisely because it is radically apolitical or atheist. Political liberalism is the ridiculous mating of liberalism and politics or philosophy. It is the dishonest moralization or sanctification of liberalism's inherent nihilism. Strauss and Schmitt rightly insisted that political liberalism owes its amazing success to its amazingly successful dishonesty.

Neither liberals nor philosophers are politically liberal -- for opposing reasons. Philosophers lack the knowledge to favor either their philosophic or their moral-political passions; liberals reject the pious heart of both politics and philosophy, faith in an eternal, non-arbitrary good. Both liberals (nihilists) and philosophers or political-moral men reject the liberalizing of politics, morality and philosophy.

Those not alive to the reason for that rejection do not perceive philosophy's need for exotericism. Political liberals have no access to what philosophy means -- for that they are too "political." Nor do they experience what it means to be political -- for that they are too "philosophic." They can neither endure a nihilism for which nothing really exists; nor can they embrace the illiberalism responsible for moral-political life and for philosophic questioning of that life. Consequently they live a lie made credible by successful propaganda. Political liberalism misrepresents both politics and liberalism.

Political liberalism makes defense of individual freedom politically obligatory. For authentic liberalism, on the contrary, nothing is obligatory. It is as if the chief political passion, moral indignation, took liberalism's lawlessness under its protection. Imagine a Leontius whose moral outrage defends his "right" to unlawful (now lawful!) pleasures. The contemporary erosion of morality in liberal democracies springs from this pseudo-liberal moralizing of immorality. What else can one expect of nations which tolerate defamation of old-fashioned fundamentalist piety far more easily than jokes about minorities or women! The last thing that will cure America's crime problems is more money for liberal education: "How can institutions as thoroughly corrupt as our universities be a source of moral improvement!"[12]

If America's moral ills can still be cured, it will be by a patriotic, as opposed to a liberal, education. For liberal education, whether genuine or in its pseudo-liberal (political liberal) caricature, is precisely what alienates and disenchants the insightful among the young, driving them to despair, crime or apathy. Less deluded than their pseudo-liberal professors, they divine liberal education's moral-political bankruptcy.

Political liberalism attempts to blunt that divination by creating a fake Garden of Eden, one with no forbidden fruit (except illiberal politics, philosophy and piety!) -- while authentic liberalism is a godless wasteland, honest about its inability to bear any fruit. Realization of that inability informs Adams' Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres. That book's ending is a tribute of despair by an atheist, aware of his nihilism, to the most beautiful of all architecture, the Gothic cathedral: " ... never let us forget that Faith alone supports it and that, if Faith fails,

Heaven is lost. The equilibrium is visibly delicate beyond the line of safety; danger lurks in every stone. The peril of the heavy tower, of the restless vault, of the vagrant buttress; the uncertainty of logic ... the irregularities of the mental mirror -- all these haunting nightmares of the Church are expressed as strongly by the Gothic Cathedral as though it had been the cry of human suffering, and as no emotion had ever been expressed before or is likely to find expression again. The delight of its aspirations is flung up to the sky. The pathos of its self-distrust and anguish of doubt is buried in the earth as its last secret. You can read out of it whatever else pleases your youth and confidence; to me, this is all." This closing summary refutes those who believe such books can be rendered obsolete by advances in medieval scholarship. To be sure, Adams was, to some extent, under that scholarship's influence and, to this extent, he was not scientific. But, as he noted in a 1905 letter to his friend Gaskell, "this book ... is my declaration of principles as head of the Conservative Christian Anarchists, a party numbering one member." Those principles, as revealed in the book's closing words, arise from authentic scientific insight, which as such is incapable of being superseded by any future scholarly findings.

No work springing from realization of life's emptiness can become scientifically obsolete. For this realization -- and only this realization! -- is what it means to be scientific, to know the universe for what it is. Men who want science and not merely its moral-political propaganda, its grovelling for social acceptance, always will prize Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres' revelation of the Gothic cathedral's hopeless yearning to escape "its self- distrust and anguish of doubt." Deluded by their grovelling, their need to believe in scholarly-scientific progress, academic "liberals" are too cowardly to confront this nihilist anguish.

That desperation informs the only religion which authentic liberals respect, even if they must reject it, something akin to Kierkegaard's terrifying leap into impossibility, faith in an omnipotent savior's power to rescue their lives from reality's nihilism. But, unlike Kierkegaard, authentic liberals cannot believe in what they know to be impossible, however desirable it may be (cf. Strauss' discussion of serious atheism at the end of his autobiography in the English translation of his Spinoza book). Nevertheless there is a crucial contrast between Kierkegaard's desperation, his realization of his piety's impossibility, and political liberalism's dishonest obfuscation of that desperation, its promise of heaven on earth through its "liberation" movements or what Strauss more accurately called Spinoza`s machiavellian theology. No serious liberal can help but be moved by Kierkegaard, nor can he experience

anything but contempt for all forms of political liberalism, whether they be democratic, nazi or communist.

For it is decisive, however difficult in liberal democracies, to realize that liberal politics need not be democratic or pacifist. They can be nazi or communist (or anything else) depending upon what regimes the (nihilist) individuals concerned will. For example, in Riefenstahl's Triumph of the Will, Hitler denies the state's priority over nazi individuals who, according to him, created their own state to serve their own moral taste. Their moralization (politization) of liberalism is nazi, not democratic or communist.

Neither philosophers nor loyal herd-members deemed it incumbent upon the state to further individual freedom or self- interest. Not philosophers, since their way of life was perpetual war between liberalism and illiberalism. Promoting their freedom at the expense of its suppression by illiberalism would transform philosophy's questioning into another illiberal, political faction or "truth party." In its turn, the illiberalism of real statesmen precluded legitimation of disloyalty or crime by endowing it with political rights. Nor, of course, would serious liberals, for whom nobody has a right to anything, moralize liberalism. Making something of its nothing arose from cowardice, the fear of nihilism responsible for political liberalism. Corrupting politics and morality, that cowardice's pseudo-liberal propaganda popularized (moralized) liberalism's nihilist erosion of the illiberalism informing both politics and philosophy: science abandoned teleology and politics declared its independence from "nature and nature's god" or "the protection of divine providence."

"Conceived in liberty," America was the first nation ever to base its claim to independence on the right of all men (including philosophers) to pursue their happiness. This American liberalism created enormous difficulty both for philosophy and for politics, the perplexity noted above in the preface to Rousseau's "Has the Restoration of the Sciences and Arts Tended to Purify or Corrupt Morals?" So far as I can determine, the only men seriously grappling with this problem in a philosophic way are Jaffa and his best students. Emphasizing the Declaration of Independence's reliance upon "nature and nature's god" and "the protection of divine providence," they strive to give liberalism a pious (political) rather than an atheist grounding. This emphasis denies my conviction that liberalism is essentially godless (nihilist). Our opposition on this crucial matter springs from a fundamental difference on the meaning of human life: Is it political (pious) and therefore best un-

derstood philosophically or is it nihilist (godless) and therefore best understood scientifically?

Liberal demands for political implementation of individual rights have no place in philosophy and had no place in illiberalism (politics). I believe that liberalism reflects the victory of science and the resulting death of philosophy and politics, both of which presuppose religion, the existence of a permanent, non-arbitrary good to guide moral-political life. Science denies its existence. Science is nihilist or atheist, while philosophy is political or pious. "Political philosophy" is as tautological as "nihilist science" or "anti-liberal politics" or "illiberal piety" or "anti-liberal morality" or "nihilist liberalism" or "illiberal philosophy" or "atheist liberalism" or "atheist science" or "liberal science" or "political morality."

Illiberal thought knew no science as such. Instead there was a variety of conflicting sciences (Stoic, Epicurean, Aristotelian, etc.) as there was a variety of conflicting civic gods (Athenian, Spartan, Israeli, Aztec, Zulu, etc.). Each illiberal (prescientific) "science" was subordinated to some metaphysical-theological notion of man's highest good. Science as such arises with the scientist's declaration of independence from any permanent, non-arbitrary notion of good and bad, right and wrong, that is, from any political loyalty. It arises from atheist rejection of any absolute ground for such loyalty. Or, as Nietzsche put it, philosophy's worst error is its invention of a true, eternal good. Science's exposure of this pious fraud means liberal denigration of politics and, therefore, of philosophy.

For science, the war in the soul of a Leontius, a Socrates or an Alcibiades, like all moral-political life, is the product of despotic willfulness. In Natural Right and History,[13] Strauss notes that Weber needed to will an irreconcilable conflict between atheist and pious anguish for "without that combination, life would cease to be tragic and thus lose its depth." In the liberal world of science, Weber's world and mine, tragic depth, like anything that aspires to be something and not nothing, arises from arbitrary will or commitment.

In that world, mere survival is a miracle of *ex nihilo* creation. Consider Nietzsche's description of his kind: "To those men who are important to me, I wish suffering, being forsaken, sickness, maltreatment, degradation -- I wish that profound self-contempt, the torture of distrust of oneself, the anguish of the conquered not to be unknown to them. I have no pity for them, because I wish them the only thing which can prove whether one has value or not -- that one holds out."[14]

The revolution in my thinking responsible for this book arose from acceptance of science and, therefore, of liberalism (nihilism) and rejection of illiberalism and, therefore, of philosophy and politics. Prior to that change I confused liberalism with politics, science with philosophy, Socrates with Nietzsche.

My scientific or liberal error about Socratic questioning derived it from a total ignorance which justified anything or nothing. This ignorance made any decision to do anything (including philosophy) a matter of arbitrary nihilist will, thus the equation of Socrates and Nietzsche. It prevented me from perceiving that Socrates, like all illiberal men, herd members, never for a moment doubted the existence of an absolute good legitimating his "truth" party. The conflict with politics, philosophy's heart, sprang from Socratic awareness of lacking an adequate grasp of that good. This lack sparked his inability to justify either his own "truth" party or that of the pious Athenians who killed him. Socrates claimed only an inadequate divination (Republic, 505D-E; 508E-509A), insufficient to legitimize either a new "truth" party or whole-souled rejection of the old, but sufficient to embark on his always questionable questioning.

Like Mill, I wanted to make Socrates respectable among intellectuals molded by science; that is, I made him liberal. But one cannot have one's cake and eat it too: Socrates was not scientific and, therefore, not liberal. Put differently: I did not realize how political and pious philosophy is or how godless and nihilist science (liberalism) is. Science whose thinking informs most, if not all, contemporary liberal education and politics, rejects permanent, non-arbitrary limits to its technology (science) or creativity (humanities). This rejection is liberalism's heart or heartlessness. Prior to realization of its atheism I failed to see that the conflict between liberalism and philosophy, unlike that between philosophy and illiberalism, is, at least for philosophy, total war without possibility of reconciliation or compromise. For liberalism there is no inevitability of war. As Schmitt and Strauss noted, wars are over conflicting views of what is right and good. They are fought by men persuaded that their morality really is better than that of their enemies; they are, like Socrates, moved by concern with the true good.

If no non-arbitrary good exists there is no reason for either war or philosophy or indeed, for anything. Democratic and communist, as opposed to nazi, liberals tend to interpret lack of war's inevitability as incentive to establish perpetual peace, even by fighting wars to end all wars! However, in a scientific (liberal) world, the bias for peace is no more valid than that for war; everything is a matter of arbitrary whim:

the taste of a Clemenceau or a Mangin is not that of a Chamberlain or a Reagan. Only the former, surely not the latter, will a reality in which "war is less costly than slavery ... The choice always is between Verdun and Dachau." [15] Incidentally the chapters on Verdun and "A Patriotic Education" [16] in Dutuard's book depict a moral, as opposed to a liberal (nihilist) education, the sort which Conrad would have approved for Singleton: [17]

> In 1929 when I was nine, my father took me on a pilgrimage to the battlefields ... My state of mind was like that of a little boy of Sparta standing reverently at Thermopylae; I was David weeping on Gilboa. No historical remains I have seen since, however impressive, not even the Colosseum or the temples of Paestum, moved me so profoundly as the forts of Vaux and Douaumont. Standing before these crumpled turrets and these sightless loopholes, I had a revelation of history and of glory and of what posterity is ... Under the old concrete blocks, now half embedded in the soil, was the perfumed humidity of an underground cathedral ... I breathed this heroism in deeply ... I had received from my father a patriotic education ... My father was interested only in France, and the glory of his country filled him with pride ... behind him one perceived the long line of trucks with lights extinct rumbling along the Voie Sacrée, trench mortars spitting fire, houses blown up, shells raining on Verdun ... How could one but be roused to enthusiasm at the age of nine, at the thought of being heir to all that, the continuer, the future of all this glory, the posterity of these comrades-in-arms?

In any case, whatever one's cherished bigotry and however fanatic one's loyalty to it, success, political-moral victory, always means its willful imposition – as Weber willed a mankind which would take tragic depth seriously. The question is: whose bigotry will enjoy global hegemony.[18]

Philosophy and politics both combat this reduction of morality or religion to victorious propaganda; they fight liberalism to insure that their world of warring moralities is not nothing. Philosophy allies itself with illiberal piety and morality in this struggle. Their crusade against liberalism fights reduction of life to "a world of fun, a world devoid of seriousness." They want to make war philosophic not scientific (liberal), inherently meaningful struggle to the death, not senseless

slaughter triggered by fanatic loyalty. Jaffa's critique of my Verdun tribute, is informed by this desire.

War cannot be both scientific and philosophic. The title of the first essay reflects my new outlook: "Political Philosophy or Nihilist Science? Education's Only Serious Question."

Chapter 1

Political Philosophy or Nihilist Science?

Education's Only Serious Question

Harry Jaffa did not learn from his teacher, Leo Strauss, that moral indignation is the greatest enemy of philosophy.

-- Walter Berns

I

Enemies and friends have sought clarification of recent changes in my outlook. In the last decade it has changed three times. The first two changes still assumed that thoughtful men were confronted with fundamental alternatives between which choice was difficult, if not impossible. I saw these alternatives first as ancients or moderns, then as philosophy or politics. The third and deepest change led me to see truth as scientific. I no longer believe that an alternative exists to science. If one were available, it would be philosophy. Civilization, culture, humanities are parts of science, its window-dressing. Scientific knowledge, the only real knowledge or wisdom, is rare, although nothing is more easily acquired.

Science emerges when anyone, from cavemen to contemporaries, declares his independence from philosophy. Prior to this declaration of independence, there is no science as such. Instead there is Aristotelian or epicurean or thomist or Newtonian or Einsteinian or Christian Science, etc. Each of these pseudo-sciences is subordinated to some more or less clearly articulated philosophic (or theological) theory about the universe. Each subordinates science's radically personal, incommunicable core to a hypothesis or theory, a philosophic effort to communi-

cate something common to the whole universe. In the next section of this paper, I will clarify science's incommunicable, because apolitical, essence. Here I want just to note that communicable science really is philosophy. Not science, but philosophy is political and therefore communicable. Unlike philosophy, science does not delude itself into the belief that it has any redeeming social value.

The differing pseudo-sciences are guided by different, often opposing, philosophies (or theologies). Genuine science eliminates this proliferation of pseudo-sciences. Its independence from philosophy means destruction of all moral-political-religious restraints. It denies that any limits exist to its experience or experimentation.

Sometimes I ask students if any real restraints, limits set by something like nature or gods, exist to curb scientific experimentation. Can science, for example, make men immortal or transform them into eagles? Most students deny that anything is intrinsically impossible. They acknowledge that some things probably will not happen tomorrow and even in a century, but, in principle, nothing prevents anything imaginable from happening at any time. Like good liberal democrats, these same students usually cling to a groundless faith that science's uncurbed experimentation ought to be used for liberal democratic goals--to promote freedom rather than slavery, peace rather than war. As if that made any difference in the nihilist world revealed by science! The faith that science's omnipotence can be restrained in the name of some nonarbitrary moral obligation is unscientific. It is relapse into the philosophic illusion from which science liberates itself. Interpreted scientifically, any such relapse, any moral-political commitment, springs from the tyrannic decision to have it so: all moral-political demands are efforts to tyrannize over reality, to replace nature or truth with the propaganda dearest to one's heart.

I use "science" in its original meaning, *scientia*, knowledge of the way things really are. It is the only genuine knowledge and it is readily available always and everywhere. Science is prior to the usual distinctions -- right and wrong, truth and falsity, death and life, freedom and determinism, beast and man, dreaming and wakefulness. It is prior to all distinctions. At bottom, there is nothing complicated or sophisticated about science. Not science, but its window dressing or propaganda has sparked so-called knowledge explosions requiring complicated machinery and ever greater specialization.

Science itself is the simple realization that whatever is experienced -- a self, a world, the law of contradiction, a god or anything else -- is nothing apart from its being experienced. Science's reality is nothing

but empty experiences, impressions as Hume called them. From a scientific point of view everything high or low, including the distinction between high and low, becomes a way of experiencing, a point of view, an interpretation, a method, a discipline of thinking or perceiving. Heidegger's "Age of the World- View" rightly notes that "world view" understood scientifically "does not mean a view of the world, but the world understood as a view or picture). Existence as a whole is now understood in such a way that it only exists in the first place insofar as it is produced by man who perceives or produces it (*durch den vorstellend-herstellenden Menschen*) ... Wherever existence is not interpreted in this way, the world cannot become a view or picture; there cannot be a world view." Heidegger rightly insists that a previously unscientific world-view does not change into a scientific one, but this very thing, "that the world itself becomes a view" is the essence of science. In this regard, Nietzsche claims that, for science there are no facts, only interpretations or methods--methods of experience, points of view. There is nothing inherently rigorous or mathematical in scientific method which, rightly understood as it rarely is, means nothing more than nihilist experience, any way (or method) of experiencing -- whether it be that of a tiger, an infant or an Einstein. Science is the realization that reality is nothing but mere experience, methods of perceiving or thinking. This "definition" of science, like all theories or thoughts, is no more than another empty experience or method.

It is illusory to believe that words or thoughts, "scientific" or unscientific theories, are anything more than empty experiences, empty because they are not definable or limited by anything. Experience is its own reason or lack of reason, its own cause and its own effect. This reality revealed by science is nihilist consisting quite literally of nothing, of empty, interchangeable nothings, experiences or methods. In his Reveries of the Solitary Walker, Rousseau called them reveries. He meant that reality provides no grounds for distinguishing (private) dreams or reveries and the (public) state of wakefulness. Both are only scientific methods.

All science is nihilist. The expression "nihilist science" is as much a tautology as "scientific method" or "scientific reveries." Science is nihilist precisely because the reality grasped by it is nothing but methods or reveries. In What is Political Philosophy, Leo Strauss deplores Hobbes' scientific reduction of human life to phantasmagoria:

> In the light of Hobbes' natural science man and his works become a mere phantasmagoria. Through Hobbes' natural sci-

> ence, `the native hue' of his political science `is sicklied o'er with the pale cast' of something which is reminiscent of death but utterly lacks the majesty of death ... It seems that if we want to do justice to the life which vibrates in Hobbes' political teaching, we must understand that teaching by itself and not in the light of his natural science.[1]

This philosophic segregation of, or abstraction from, Hobbes' scientific core informs the method of interpretation common to Strauss and to Harry Jaffa, his main student. It is meant to rescue those so interpreted from their conscious or unconscious nihilism, to make them philosophic insofar as possible instead of scientific. Insofar as it is meant to be more than another scientific method, I consider this rescue mission unrealistic both in itself (since philosophy is illusory) and in contemporary regimes which foster nihilist-scientific self-knowledge.

Unaware of science's nihilism, pseudo-scientists emphasize science's proofs and discoveries, especially its potential or actual redeeming social value. They mistake science's window dressing for its core. Except for realization of life's nihilism, there are no scientific proofs or discoveries. This simple, unsophisticated realization -- and it alone -- is science. No other truth is provable or discoverable in a universe where nothing prevents anything from changing into anything else or into the nothingness which everything always is. For example, there would be no real change if, as in Kafka's Metamorphosis, men should become insects. Such transformations would be no changes in reality since neither men nor insects nor anything else is anything but the nothingness of empty phantasmagoria.

In the essentially private, incommunicable world of scientific reveries or methods, there is no place for philosophic seminars or symposia. For science is not a cooperative enterprise in which scientists work for each other and with each other, building on previous scientific findings. Science neither progresses nor regresses. It requires no complicated equipment nor intricate specialization. Its beginning and end is realization of life's nihilism. Once that is realized scientists can, to pass the time, champion any "scientific" theory or moral-political cause. So long as they exempt nothing from reality's nihilism, they can promote war or peace, evolution or creation, a stationary or a mobile earth, dictatorship or anarchy – or anything else. However they never forget that these philosophic-propagandistic conflicts between mankind's moralities have nothing to do with science, genuine knowledge of reality.

To win propaganda victories, men make distinctions between good and bad, true and false, right and wrong. Reality is not propagandistic; it makes neither these nor any other distinctions. No reason exists to want one thing rather than another. All efforts to make something out of reality's nothingness are merely other forms of that nothingness. As Goethe notes at the beginning of his Faust, all striving is the work of the devil, the tyrannic attempt to alter a reality which provides nothing for which to strive.

Like most men, Faust is philosophic in that he needs the illusion of a self and a universe which exist as something more than phantasmagoria. Philosophy is the desire to grasp and to communicate such a nonnihilist reality. It is love of wisdom or science, not science itself. If it were scientific, it would realize that truth is indifferent or repulsive, but hardly lovable. In a nihilist universe, nothing exists to love or to be loved; nothing exists to be anything but reveries or methods.

Why do most men cling so desperately to philosophic illusion! Reasons why anything exists are unavailable in a nihilist world. Reasons actually are nothing but more or less persuasive propaganda. Since philosophy is essentially political, its chief illusion is that valid, nonpropagandistic grounds support the distinctions crucial to moral-political life: freedom and slavery, justice and injustice, good and bad.

Among contemporary academics, only Harry Jaffa consistently defends philosophy as a moral-political enterprise. It is therefore surprising that Jaffa's guidance is not sought by all professors and students yearning for a reality in which their appeals to justice and freedom are more than propaganda. Their usual unwillingness to seek it reveals a nihilism destructive of those appeals. This nihilism is hidden from them by their deficient self-knowledge. Propelled by this deficiency, Jaffa's enemies often denounce his thought as too political to be philosophic. Their "philosophy" is remote from moral indignation, the hatred of enemies responsible for political partisanship. Jaffa knows better: any non-nihilist effort to know oneself and the universe is radically political and, as such, unthinkable without that hatred.

If there were any serious contemporary opposition to my scientific rejection of philosophy, it would be Jaffa or his best students. I am grateful for their help in clarifying that rejection. Other academics can provide little, if any, help. Although they usually imagine themselves opposed to my scientific orientation, they actually are not. They are nihilists whose poor self-knowledge is responsible for their ignorance of both science and philosophy. They assume that science or philosophy

are what is taught in science or philosophy departments. Nothing could be further from the truth!

In those departments, as in academic life generally, there is hopeless confusion about science and philosophy and therefore about education. Neither science nor philosophy are academic departments. Nor are they part of culture or civilization or the humanities. Neither is part of anything. Understood in its own terms, each claims that it alone comprehends all reality. I believe that no alternative exists to science; philosophers are scientists whose deficient self- knowledge is responsible for apparently ineradicable illusions about themselves and consequently about science.

Only one question exists for genuine education: which of the two, science or philosophy, comprehends reality for what it is? Everything in schools not moved by the determination to answer this question is the usual liberal academic trivia, not education. In this introduction, I sketched the grounds for my being a scientist rather than a philosopher. The rest of the paper further distinguishes science from philosophy, apolitical from political thought.

II

Philosophers are unrealistic because their self-knowledge is political. This self-knowledge blinds them to life's nihilism. Philosophy springs from common sense or what Nietzsche, more nihilistically, called the herd instinct. The herd instinct's essence is its being common or communal, an instinct which makes political sense out of life. This instinct inspires the faith that one has an identity distinguishing one from other things in a universe shared with them. It creates the illusion that reality is a coherent, intelligible world, not merely a chaos of empty reveries or experiences.

Although it obviously is impossible to experience anything but experiences, herd instinct faith makes men believe that they grasp things which exist as more than mere experience. However much the herd instinct may vary in different bestial and human herds, it never is democratic. For it always inculcates one chief care in all herd members. That care is to get what is good for oneself, to live the good life. This care in informed by the moral-political orthodoxies of one's herd. Unlike unphilosophic herd members, philosophic herd members turn this care into a question whose answer is not self-evident. Philosophers, that is, philosophic herd members, spend their lives striving to answer what they see as their herd's chief question. Consequently philosophers al-

ways are radically political. There are no apolitical philosophers, only philosophic herd members.

The primacy of the moral-political question, the question of the good life, is revealed not by rational inquiry, since it sets the goal of all rational inquiry. Faith in its primacy is forced upon both philosophic and unphilosophic herd members by what Nietzsche in his Joyful Science calls the strongest instinct of any herd. In his Zarathustra he rightly discerns enslavement to the herd instinct as the hallmark of all "the famous wise men," the philosophers.

Philosophers do not interpret their herd instinct orientation scientifically, as faith in an illusion (*Credo quia absurdum*), but philosophically, as a kind of seeing through a glass darkly which they strive to clarify (*Credo ut intelligam*). Blinding philosophers to life's nihilism, this faith creates the conviction that they inhabit a universe in which their (internal) selves and the (external) world exist as something more than phantasmagoria.

The self-knowledge created by herd instinct faith compels philosophers to see themselves as radically political. The philosophic way of life is a never ending dialogue (with fellow citizens) aimed at discovering what is good; not what is good for some nihilist individual who as such has no good or evil, but what is good for oneself as a citizen, a herd-member. Consequently, the question of the good life is the question of the best regime or political order. It is not a serious question for scientists, but then, what can be serious in science's nihilism! Nothing apart from arbitrary willfulness, the tyrannic resolve to force seriousness on nihilism's indifference. In a book aptly entitled Beyond Good and Evil, Nietzsche describes philosophy as the most tyrannic form of this will to overpower reality's nihilism.

Herd instinct faith permits, indeed compels, philosophers to perceive themselves as herd members, not as nihilist individuals. This political orientation is responsible for the philosopher's truth in a universe in which he and what is good for him exist as something more than nihilist experience. Without the illusions inspired by this faith, he would regard his self and his desire to get what is good for it as no more than reveries. In science's nihilist reality there are no goods to seek or selves to seek them. Consequently scientists can, like Humpty Dumpty, say or mean anything about anything, including their selves and what is beneficial to them. They are not bound by their herd instinct imperative to obtain what is good.

Non-nihilist goods and evils always are political. Private, apolitical "goods" or "evils" exist only as nihilist methods. That is why any seri-

ous concern with good or evil, right or wrong, truth or falsity always is radically political. Such concerns move men insofar as they are citizens, not insofar as they have achieved scientific liberation from civic or familial ties. Only philosophic or unphilosophic herd members, not scientists, are moved by a serious need to distinguish right from wrong, truth from lies.

Philosophy's political faith is unavailable to men not born into herds sanctifying that faith, herds in which there is no separation of church and state, religion and politics. Only the piety fostered by such herds makes possible philosophy. Consequently nihilism is inevitable when self-knowledge comes to citizens of contemporary regimes which encourage the liberal faith that government exists to serve the individuals governed. Such nihilist regimes teach that the rights of individuals are primary. Behind this nihilism is the scientific realization that no herd is more than the will of its members that it be: "political" life, the concern with right or wrong or with truth or falsity, is grounded in nothing but nihilist will or reveries.

Politics in these contemporary regimes is scientific and therefore radically apolitical. It consists of nihilist individuals doing what Humpty Dumpty does, persuading and/or forcing others to accept their reveries as authoritative. This unpolitical politics at bottom is more or less effective propaganda created by nihilists who are, and who seek, nothing but scientific phantasmagoria.

Marxist withering away of the state, the death of politics, is not something that will occur only in a future classless society in which hatred and desire for revenge between men finally is eradicated. It occurs here and now whenever men see themselves primarily as individuals with individual rights not as pious fathers and citizens with political and familial duties. When this individualism is rightly understood, as it rarely is, it is seen to issue from scientific realization of life's nihilism. Depending on their tastes or "values," nihilists may prefer democratic, communist or nazi reveries. In each case, politics is reduced to radically apolitical phantasmagoria.

The more scientific enlightenment is permitted in contemporary regimes grounded in nihilist-individualistic rights, the more herd members realize that nothing holds their herd together except force and/or propaganda. To prevent the resultant anarchy from dissolving all political ties, effective propaganda is required. Since (philosophic) propaganda cannot be effective in scientifically enlightened herds, police and military terror is the only resort there. It is appropriate that the old Greek word for political community (*polis*) comes down almost un-

changed to our modern-nihilist regime as "police." In scientifically enlightened herds, the police are the heart of politics. These herds -- that is, all contemporary regimes -- become police states once they see their nihilism for what it is. The only difference is that liberal democratic propaganda more effectively prevents scientific self-knowledge. Contrary to appearances, liberal democracies are more immune to scientific enlightenment than tyrannies. Less immunity is responsible for brutal suppression of individualism by fascists and communists.

On the day the Russians began their extirpation of Polish freedom, a liberal newscaster in America, appalled by their brutality, gave this example of it at its worst: The communists forced cancellation of a play glorifying a lesbian mother's struggle to raise her sons. In private, familial matters communist morality is traditional, finding lesbian mothers abhorrent. Convinced that only terror and propaganda can make men seriously moral or political, the communists are not prepared to sanction dialogues about the merits of lesbian motherhood. The newscaster hoped that sometime in the future the communists would see the error of their ways. For him, political life is essentially a life of dialogue, the free exchange of ideas, not violent suppression of the immoral and the dissident.

The newscaster valued individual freedom above all. Like most democratic liberals, he failed to see that communist suppression occurs precisely because communists share his liberal view that by nature men are individuals liberated from all moral-political ties and, therefore, free to choose their own morality, however disgusting it might be. As Rousseau's Social Contract claims, one must be a god or superman capable of destroying man's true (individualist) nature, if one is to transform men into citizens. In the absence of superhuman power, what except terror and propaganda can compel men to be moral or political once scientific enlightenment succeeds? Its lack of success in contemporary liberal democrats permits them still to cling to the deficient self-knowledge responsible for their insistence upon the political desirability of individual freedom, the withering away of the state.

Scientific self-knowledge necessarily translates into tyrannic politics. Consistent opposition to nazism or communism arises not from liberalism, but from the political (illiberal) faith informing philosophy. This faith inspired the illusion necessary to non- tyrannic politics, convincing ancient herd members that their being born a citizen of their particular herd was not an accident occurring to individuals free from all moral-political ties. The political faith at philosophy's core was sanctified by the particular gods of one's herd. Otherwise being born in

this herd rather than another one will indeed seem merely accidental as it does in all contemporary- scientific herds. In these herds, neither non-tyrannic rule nor philosophers are possible.

Birth must seem sanctified to support non-tyrannic politics. This sanctification could be experienced only in ancient herds whose gods, moral-political authorities, were political not cosmopolitan. In these herds, there was no separation of church and state, morality and politics, conscience and society. Their citizens considered it impious to share moral-political ties with foreigners.

Nothing is less realistic than the self-knowledge inspired by those prescientific herds. Yet it is crucial to realize that philosophy could emerge only in them. Science is unhistorical; it surfaces wherever reality's nihilism is grasped. Philosophy's emergence requires rare historical conditions no longer available today. Its serious pursuit was limited to ancient herds without scientific enlightenment. To be sure, philosophic herd members questioned their herd's claim to answer its main question, to know what was good for its members. However in the decisive respect, philosophic herd members sided with their unphilosophic brethren by embracing the faith that such a good exists as something more than scientific reveries. The philosopher's pestering of fellow citizens with his questioning seemed disloyal only to those unable to discern its patriotic core. His job was twofold: 1) Questioning his herd's moral-political faith. 2) Defending that faith against scientific-nihilist (liberal) enlightenment.

The philosopher was only a seeker after wisdom. Achievement of wisdom was precluded by philosophy's dependence upon faith, not knowledge. Without their political faith, philosophers would have had no self and no goal in life, no reason to be or not to be. Philosophers saw themselves as political philosophers because philosophy's heart and soul was political. On philosophic horizons, politics did not present itself as something vile, generating passions hostile to free inquiry. The chief political passion, hatred of enemies and desire for vengeance against them, springs from the herd instinct faith that one has or needs goods without which life is not worth living. Hatred is the natural reaction to whoever threatens those goods. Consider Psalm 137.

In ancient, prescientific herds, that fury was sanctified by familial and civic piety. Without this sanctified hatred, there can be scientists but neither serious philosophers nor citizens. In the contemporary absence of that sanctification, hatred of enemies usually is justified by liberal propaganda's apolitical wars to end all wars, to establish peace on earth, good will to all men.

No one realized better than Nietzsche the decisive role played by that hatred in philosophic or prescientific thought. Its destruction, the elimination of what he called the spirit of revenge, would elevate those few capable of it to supermen. The need to transcend all philosophic, that is illiberal or hateful, thought is at the core of his teaching.[2]

> That man be saved from the desire for revenge: that is for me the bridge to the highest hope ... The spirit of revenge that has been [in philosophic, prescientific thought] man's best reflection ... Everywhere where responsibility or reasons were sought, it was the spirit of revenge doing the seeking. Over millennia this spirit of revenge has achieved such a mastery over mankind that all metaphysics, psychology, conceptions of history, but above all morality, is stigmatized with it. As far as man has thought, he has dragged the bacillus of revenge into things ... We others who wish to win back for becoming its innocence wish to be the missionaries of a purer thought: that nothing has given man his qualities, neither god, nor society, nor his parents and ancestors, nor he himself--that nothing is responsible for him. There is no being (Wesen) that could be made responsible for anyone's existing or being the way he is ... There is no purpose, no sense for our being ... This is a great solace, in this lies the innocence of all existence.

Chapter 2

What is Bigotry? A Note on Academic and Un-Academic Philosophers

Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past ... Where does the past exist, if at all? In records ... In the mind. In human memories ... We, the Party, control all records and we control all memories. Thus we control the past ... You believe that reality is something objective, external, existing in its own right. You also believe that the nature of reality is self-evident. When you delude yourself into thinking that you see something, you assume that everyone else sees the same thing as you. But reality is not external. Reality exists in the human mind and nowhere else. Not in the individual mind which can make mistakes and in any case soon perishes; only in the mind of the Party which is collective and immortal. Whatever the Party holds to be the truth is the truth! It is impossible to see reality except by looking through the eyes of the Party! ... We control matter because we control the mind. Reality is inside the skull ... There is nothing that we cannot do. Invisibility, levitation -- anything! I could float off this floor like a soap bubble if I wished to. I do not wish to, because the Party does not wish it. Get rid of those ideas about the laws of nature. We make the laws of nature! ... The world is as old as we are, no older. How could it be older? Nothing exists except through human consciousness ... Before man there was nothing. After man, if he could come to an end, there would be nothing. Outside man there is nothing ... The Party decrees that the earth is the center of the uni-

> *verse. The sun and the stars go around it ... This is not simple solipsism. Collective or political solipsism if you like ... The real power we have to fight for night and day, is not power over things, but over men ... We are breaking down the habits of thought which have survived from before our Revolution ... We control life at all its levels. You are imagining that there is something called human nature which will be outraged by what we do and will turn against us. But we create human nature. Men are infinitely malleable. Humanity is the Party.*
>
> *-- Orwell, 1984, Part III (Chapters 2-3)*

> *German students: The Nationalsocialist Revolution means a total upheaval of our German reality ... Be hard and authentic in your demands ... Propositions and `ideas' should not be the principles of your being, The Führer himself and he alone is the present and future German reality and its law. Always learn to know more authentically: from now on everything demands commitment and all action demands responsibility. Heil Hitler!*
>
> *-- Heidegger, Freiburg Student Newspaper (November 3, 1933) p. 1.*

I am a nihilist professor of philosophy. I once believed that intolerance of my teaching would come primarily from the Right. I was wrong. Liberal professors have condemned my nihilism as unacademic philosophy, some have even attempted to prevent my teaching it at any college or university. Conservative colleagues have never been that intolerant of our disagreement about what constitutes proper academic teaching of philosophy. This intolerance springs from liberalism's fear of its inherent nihilism. Democratic liberals really are on my side. They are nihilists too cowardly to face their own nihilism.

Whittaker Chambers indirectly showed liberalism's nihilist consequences in his comments on Bukharin's last words. Under pressure from Stalin's communist party, Bukharin, one of the original leaders, confessed to crimes of which both he and Stalin knew him to be innocent. His final words reveal the dread of nihilism responsible for his willingness to do whatever the Party required. Bukharin said:

bent upon conscious or unconscious obfuscation of the nihilism informing their liberalism.

To grasp the deep need for this obfuscation, one must first comprehend nihilism's meaning. Like most technical philosophic jargon, "nihilism" is a pretentious way of saying something simple, an effort to flee the horror in that simplicity. Nihilism means "nothing" or "nothingness." It teaches that nothing -- and only nothing! -- is real or true. Hereafter I use words such as "nothing," "nothingness," "emptiness" or "void" instead of "nihilism." This avoids the window-dressing of scholarly jargon designed to hide reality's nothingness.

My philosophy is that nothing really exists. Consequently any faith in anything's being something rather than nothing, any desire to be alive rather than dead, is illusory. The conviction that one's self or anything else is something and not nothing contradicts the basic, "unchangeable" character of reality which is nothing. In this decisive sense, life in all its forms, is self-contradictory. Thus any effort to be genuinely philosophic or scientific -- to know reality for what it is -- must, like all attempts to do anything, be self-contradictory. Only being and doing nothing is consistent with reality's emptiness. The love of death informing Wagner's Tristan and Isolde is more realistic than the desire for self-preservation. There is no self to preserve!

Nothing is easier to perceive than reality's emptiness. Genuine philosophy or science is the realization that nothing, no divine or natural order, endows anything with a non-arbitrary being, an identity not subject to radical change at any moment. There is nothing in (or behind or above) things to make them more than empty experiences, impressions as Hume called them. Reality and everything in it is nothing but empty impressions, experiences, bigotries, dreams whose dreamer is himself a dream.

Here the paths of men part; the crucial line is drawn between those with faith in something, especially in some moral-political cause, and those who see themselves and the universe for the nothing which they and it are. I side with realists for whom everything high or low (including the distinction between high and low, true and false, right and wrong, life and death) is radically devalued when grasped in its essential nothingness.

This devaluation seems ridiculous or abhorrent to the vast majority whose need for faith in common sense, in their being something and not nothing, compels rejection of genuine liberal education. The "liberal" in liberal education means liberation from that common sense faith. In a [illegible] this liberation guarantees unlimited freedom, unre-

> I shall now speak of myself, of the reasons for my repentence ... For when you ask yourself: `If you must die, what are you dying for?' -- an absolutely black nothingness suddenly rises before you with startling vividness. There was nothing to die for if one wanted to die unrepentent ... This, in the end, disarmed me completely and led me to bend my knees before the party and the country. And when you ask yourself: `Very well, suppose you do not die; suppose by some miracle you remain alive, again for what? Isolated from everybody, an enemy of the people, in an inhuman position, completely isolated from everything that constitutes the essence of life.' And at such moments, comrade judges, everything personal, all personal incrustation, all rancor, pride and a number of other things fall away, disappear ... [1]

What Bukharin meant by "everything personal ... all personal rancor, pride" is elaborated in the fictional version of his speech in Koestler's Darkness at Noon (Chapter 4). The close of this speech is sparked by an intellectual candor foreign to the pious histrionics which embolden a Thoreau, a Gandhi or a King to hurl defiance at their accusers. Too honest to embrace their illusions about man's divine or natural rights, Bukharin has only his self-created faith in his party and its leader:

> Vanity and the last remains of pride whispered to me: Die in silence, say nothing, or die with a noble gesture, with a moving swan-song on your lips; pour out your heart and challenge your accusers. That would have been easier for an old rebel, but I overcame the temptation.

Chambers comments:

> I do not understand how men, knowing that another man spoke these words at such a moment, can read them and fail to be rent apart by their meaning ... I would print them bold and hang them at the front of college classrooms.[2]

Chambers was wrong in the case of most liberal academics -- and this means most American professors, especially those at "prestigious" universities. Bukharin's words cannot touch the souls of intellectuals

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his discipline. His was a safe, conventional answer to her dangerously unconventional question.

"Discipline" is a military term. One disciplines oneself to reject "forbidden fruit." Discipline substitutes for rational persuasion, particularly when reason is with the forbidden, life-threatening temptation. The professor's flight to his discipline reflects the drive, conscious or unconscious, to escape the moral-political void created by his liberalism. Anyone taking Bukharin's words to heart realizes the powerful need for the professor's intellectual cowardice.

The student was asking for genuine knowledge of herself and her world, blissfully unaware that knowledge reveals an "absolutely black nothingness." The professor's cowardly unwillingness to risk her question indicates more awareness of its horror. This awareness was mercifully diluted for him by pride in his discipline.

That dilution is anathema in any academic institution whose aim is education and not propaganda on behalf of salutary myths. In Thomas Mann's Tristan (Chapter 10), the usual replacement of education by propaganda is deplored:

> The world is full of what I call the `unconscious type' and I cannot stand all this dumb, unknowing, uncomprehending life and action, this world of infuriating naivete around me! It tortures me, driving me irresistibly to explain, to articulate all existence, to bring it to self-consciousness as far as I can ... unconcerned whether the consequences are helpful or harmful, whether it brings relief or intensifies the pain.

Bukharin's words, like Beckmann's self- portrait, demonstrates that real education always intensifies the pain.

The professor's flight from the student's question avoids that pain. When those sharing his intellectual cowardice band together, they create, over centuries, a shield of respectability for their "disciplines" and for schools as refuges where they are free to bury themselves in their pseudo-academic studies. For them Wagner is a "musician" whose work is best evaluated by "experts" in music departments. Each department is free to deal with its own discipline by its accepted "methodologies." This is one of the most frequent misinterpretations of academic freedom. Shielded by this mindless view of academic freedom from the harshness of the student's question, the professor confidently dismissed it. In this important respect, he mirrors the liberal democracy shaping his defective pedagogy.

strained even by some non-arbitrary personal identity. True liberalism, the product of liberal education, is the liberation of nothing to its nothingness. That liberation opens an abyss in which nothing is forbidden or commanded, good or bad, true or false. Any effort to establish impersonal, unbiased criteria about anything -- including philosophy or science -- is, in reality, bigotry at its worst. It is an un-self-conscious form of Bukharin's consciously fanatic determination to avoid life's emptiness.

Reality's "absolutely black nothingness" was obfuscated by ancient-medieval pieties and still is obfuscated by their remnants in contemporary "philosophy" and "science." Real philosophy or science makes it impossible to create in oneself the illusion of being something rather than nothing. Consequently nothing is less welcome in universities than academic courses and programs encouraging genuine philosophy. Precisely such courses seem unacademic to pseudo-philosophers whose fear of reality's nothingness requires uplifting propaganda rather than education.

When Chambers recommended Bukharin's last words or when I recommend Max Beckmann's grim woodcut self-portrait (1922), as I usually do in every philosophy course, they are not recommended because they belong to academic disciplines called "political science" or "art" in order to promote "inter-disciplinary" studies between them and "philosophy." I use Bukharin and Beckmann, as I use Wagner's Tristan and Isolde or Grosz's *Ecce Homo*, because they are among the few attempts to seriously confront the horror of self-knowledge and knowledge of one's world or worlds. This is the only worthwhile goal of any study, "disciplinary" or "interdisciplinary."

In this decisive sense, no real distinction exists between sciences and humanities or between any of the so-called disciplines. What any academic institution worthy of the name does for its students and teachers, is done insofar as it can be, by serious reflection on works such as Bukharin's last words or Beckmann's self-portrait. If the goal of education, as distinct from propaganda, is unflinching confrontation with the truth, such reflection is the heart of the always agonizing enterprise of learning and teaching.

The usual pseudo-academic obfuscation of that agony, and therefore of real education, was brought home to me by an exchange between a student and a professor about the worth of a class. The student asked how the course would help her to know herself and her world. The professor saw the course primarily as "rounding out the major" in

his discipline. His was a safe, conventional answer to her dangerously unconventional question.

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rious struggle: the war between reason and passion. Reason (insight into reality's nothingness) is repellent to passion.

All passions are teleological, striving to obtain some good or avoid some evil. Consequently all passions are irrational, subsisting on faith in commonsense's teleological world of goods to pursue and selves to pursue them. When genuine philosophy, liberal education, forces abandonment of this faith, the wrath and frustration of the passions is directed against reality itself. Like pseudo-liberalism (their external, political reflection) the rabid, because enlightened, passions now demand "rights" to which reason does not entitle them. That demand becomes more strident, the more its irrationality is perceived. Its most virulent, and therefore most mindless, form is radical communism, Bukharin's fanatic obedience unto death. In Bukharin, liberalism has seen itself for the nothing that it, at bottom, is. Terrified by that insight, it seeks salvation in fanatic efforts to delude itself.

The twentieth century's most realistic efforts to be political, communism and nazism, basically concur on the need for this fanatic zeal. It is the ground of their realism as distinct from pseudo-liberal propaganda's comforting dreams about humanity and its rights. Nobody better understood this than Rudolf Hess whose fanatic loyalty to Hitler ended -- and could only end! -- with his suicide in Spandau.

In The Infancy of Nazism: The Memoirs of Ex-Gauleiter Krebs, Krebs describes the fanaticism shared by Hess and Bukharin and by anyone determined to create moral-political order out of reality's void:[3]

> Hess' confession of his faith was not based on personal reverence for Hitler ... One dare not wait for a leader or call for one; one must will him! If all national socialists and ultimately the entire nation honestly will Hitler to be their leader, and then are prepared to be completely loyal to him, then Hitler actually will be the leader that Germany needs.

To those emphasizing Hitler's faults and weaknesses, Hess answered:

> I know! I know! Hitler too has faults and weaknesses. But if you had understood me correctly you would not have raised that objection. It depends on us whether we show the world his merits or his faults.

> Hess willed a Führer clothed with the glory of political infallibility and therefore did everything he could to present Hitler in this form to the nation. What was tragic in this was that he, who knew Hitler so well, actually did not believe in him but rather compelled himself to faith and, if need be, would hurl himself into the breach for Hitler.

To recalcitrant nazis who accused Hess of deluding himself, he answered that they would create a democratic anarchy of conflicting wills and viewpoints: "If you look at everything from all sides and you want free discussion about it, you never will reach a political decision."

In his characterization of Heidegger's nazism, Karl Löwith caught the heart of that movement and of its communist twin:

> The spirit of national socialism was not so much concerned with the national and the social but much more with that radically private resoluteness which rejects any discussion or mutual understanding because it relies wholly and only on itself ... At bottom all its concepts and words are the expression of the bitter and hard resoluteness of a will asserting itself in the face of its own nothingness, a will proud of its loathing for happiness, reason and compassion.[4]

That loathing is reflected in the brutality of communist and nazi politics but more clearly in the fanaticism of a Hess or a Bukharin. In their "absolutely black nothingness" nobody has a right to anything. Faith in one's "rights" must first be created by fanatic repression of real philosophy or liberal education. Genuine nazis or communists freely acknowledge the need for this liberal repression of liberalism. Inability to discern the void at liberalism's core prevents this realization by pseudo-liberal professors. This is why my nihilism generally is more tolerated by conservative than by liberal professors.

Consistent conservatives require faith in the ancient-medieval pieties discredited by liberal education. Harry Jaffa has done most to make them aware of this requirement.[5] Insofar as that faith still moves conservative appeals to duty, honor and country, they tend to be more tolerant, even somewhat compassionate, about what they regard as my misguided teaching. The strength of their piety prevents my nihilism from touching their souls.

Lacking that faith (in divine support for their right to exist) liberal professors often experience the terror of my teaching far more than

conservatives. I unmask their flight to their "established" disciplines as intellectual dishonesty. I believe that the "discipline" of philosophy is primarily, if not exclusively, concerned with facing reality's "absolutely black nothingness." That confrontation is not something to be relegated to a sub-discipline called "ethics" in a larger discipline called "philosophy" which comprises the established, traditional fields of "ontology," "logic," "epistemology," "aesthetics," etc. Any attempt to abandon philosophy's main concern to this comfortable sub-department is as vain as the claim that philosophy means impersonal, unbiased inquiry and not always personal prejudices.

My enemies in the liberal intelligentsia dominating many philosophy departments sometimes claim that my reduction of philosophy and all education to mere prejudice is my own prejudice. Rightly so! For I believe that one's own very personal biases are all that anyone can know about anything. All efforts to live (and this includes knowing and believing) to be something and not nothing -- including this paper! -- must be biased and indeed self-contradictory. The self that they contradict -- anything's true self -- is reality's "absolutely black nothingness." Refusal to acknowledge the bigoted, because self-contradictory, character of life in all its forms is the real root of all lesser bigotry, particularly of all moral-political passions ("values"). Bigotry is unavoidable for men determined to be something rather than nothing!

No impersonal, unbiased research is possible, if the only impersonal, unbiased fact is nothingness. Any effort to make something of it, including all attempts at genuine communication or community, necessarily is more or less fanatic prejudice. It remains fanaticism even and especially when it is interpreted as reason or common-sense. It surely does not cease to be personal bias because pseudo-academic philosophers, over years, have agreed among themselves that any work accredited by them is impersonal, unbiased research and not sheer bigotry!

Because my academic adversaries are afraid to face their liberalism's inherent nothingness, they cannot, as I freely do, admit that their views on academic philosophy are nothing but prejudice. Nothing is more destructive of genuinely academic teaching of philosophy than this refusal to acknowledge the necessarily bigoted character of one's most passionately held convictions. This refusal would make sense only if some god, some non-arbitrary source of truth and being existed, to insure that reality was more than empty experiences or impressions. Such divine support would guarantee that there was a final truth by which one could decide which beliefs are mere prejudices and which re-

ally are true. This faith in divine revelation was characteristic of ancient-medieval philosophy and its delusions. I interpret recourse to such a *deus ex machina* as a naive, and therefore trivial, version of the serious fanaticism freely chosen by Bukharin and Hess.

The abysmal superficiality of pseudo-liberal academic philosophers springs from their inability to perceive their own need for this divine revelation. Without realizing it, they still are mired in the pious myths of ancient-medieval philosophy and science. This lack of self-knowledge permits them to despise fundamentalist, orthodox Jews, Christians and Moslems, deriding them as champions of outdated superstition. They fail to note that remnants of the same bigotry are presupposed by their faith in the impersonal, unbiased character of their own research. Without some god to create something out of reality's nothing, the very attempt to be unbiased is far more bigoted than the self-conscious fanaticism of Bukharin or Hess. For that attempt does not realize how biased against reality and truth it is; Bukharin and Hess do!

Pseudo-liberal professors of philosophy tend to regard themselves as intellectually superior to a Bukharin or a Hess. As if reality's void did not negate any claim to non-arbitrary superiority (or equality or inferiority)! They fear to admit that Hess or Bukharin or the Khomeni know as much about what should be taught in philosophy departments as they do. What they fear is beautifully shown in Himmler's prejudices about proper scientific methodology:

> Himmler called me to account about a professor who lectured on pre-historic times ... This man had been criticizing nazi ideas about the origin of the Teutons and had condemned these ideas from alleged scientific points of view ... What ideas, Himmler said, these gentlemen get into their heads! Their scientific views were of no interest to anybody, they were just their private prejudices. But if the state or party declared a certain view as the desired starting point for scientific research, that view must be accepted as a scientific axiom, and there must be no shilly-shallying about it, still less malevolent criticism.
>
> We don't care a hoot whether this or something else was the real truth about the prehistory of the German tribes. Science proceeds from hypotheses that change every year or so. So there's no earthly reason why the party should not lay down a

> particular hypothesis as the starting point, even if it runs counter to current scientific opinion ... The teaching of German origins has depended for centuries on a falsification. We are scientifically entitled to impose one of our own at any time. [6]

If science means knowledge of reality's nothingness, then nothing prevents Himmler or anyone else from scientifically imposing his prejudices -- except lack of police and military support. Once this support is obtained, one's cherished moral-political prejudices may indeed seem more than nothing to those requiring such opiates. A genuinely liberal education strives to liberate men from the need for intellectual opiates, refuges from reality's emptiness. Real academic freedom is the freedom to confront that void's terror. It is a travesty of academic freedom to avoid that confrontation by appeals to one's professionalism, the alleged impartial objective standards of one's discipline. In this crucial sense, Hess, Bukharin and Himmler in their nazi "loathing for happiness, reason and compassion" are better academic philosophers than professors pluming themselves on their unbiased impartiality. For similar reasons, only a Bukharin or a Hess knows what it really means to call philosophy or anything else a "discipline."

Only a discipline ruthlessly inculcated over centuries and millennia, in the face of reality's nothingness, creates the illusion that anything is something and not nothing. Pseudo-academics are repelled when reminded that this successful indoctrination into their bigotry is the meaning of their pride in their discipline and its claim to professionalism. On the other hand, they find it beneath them to embrace the old, fundamentalist faith which they imply and which consistent conservatives seek to conserve: Divine guidance would be required to save their lives from reality's nothingness.

This crucial point was clear to Heidegger, the last great thinker, who as late as 1953 still praised nazism's "inner truth and greatness." In his final, posthumously published interview, he said: "Only a god can save us now." [8] Conscious of the unconscious bigotry fortifying pseudo-academics, Heidegger's nazism confronted him with that "absolutely black nothingness" from which "only a god can save us now." Even if all hope for such divine revelation is vain, as I believe it is, no serious man can avoid being deeply moved in its presence. Chamber's remarks about Bukharin's last words also apply to Heidegger's: "Is there not a stillness in the room where you read this? That is the passing of the wings of tragedy."

Chapter 3

Nihilism Challenged and Defended

Whoever stands truly and firmly on his own two feet in the world must have the courage to stand on nothing!
-- Franz Overbeck

To the Editors of the Claremont Review of Books:

Harry Neumann has a problem. And his concerns should be the concerns of all thinking men aware of the crisis of our age. While Thomas Pangle and Harry Jaffa squabble over the bones of "Leo Strauss's legacy," Neumann's recent essays treat a genuine political problem of the greatest significance. Since no response to the problem of Harry Neumann's nihilism appears forthcoming, I will briefly treat this vexing issue myself. Let me be clear at the outset. I am no expert on what Neumann has written to date. However, I do know that like a good gothic thriller, his essays chill me to the bone. Even more significant than the dread which permeates Neumann's work, is the likelihood that Nietzsche's nihilism as popularized by Neumann, is moving from its birthplace in the Old World, and now seeking a foothold in the New. Hence, it is not so much Neumann's writings that give me pause, but their alluring attraction on our polity, in however popularized a form. This, and not the moral indignation of cantankerous sophists, is the true crisis of our age, a crisis that colors the works of both Strauss and Neumann. What? Could Strauss's legacy be Neumann's nihilism? Neumann's position is clearly stated in "Political Philosophy or Nihilist Science? Education's Only Serious Question." [1] (*Natural Right and Political Right: Essays in Honor of Harry V. Jaffa*). I need only detail his more crucial points here. All previous approaches to knowledge or wisdom are radically defective. Only the nihilist scientist's perspective of ultimate reality is correct. All other views are interpretations, mere po-

litical propaganda, utilized by men wittingly or unwittingly to bolster their specific cause. Political philosophy (the term Neumann uses as a catchall phrase for these various interpretations) fosters a spirit of hatred and revenge perpetuating an endless cycle of political violence in the tenacious defense of one's own interpretation of reality. Ultimate reality is nihilistic; it is nothing but random, meaningless experiences. Neumann's preferred word for a true nihilist insight of the world is phantasmagoria.

Despite attempting a rehashed version of Schopenhauer's philosophy, Neumann's perspective is nevertheless unique among his living philosophic compatriots. Why then has he been greeted with resounding silence in these circles, with regard to the stark dichotomy between political philosophy and nihilist science that he proposes? Is Neumann the black sheep of the Straussian family? Perhaps better to compare him to the deranged family member who is hurried upstairs when company comes. And yet, from time to time, he embarrassingly escapes, most recently in "Political Philosophy or Nihilist Science?" and in "Liberal Education: The Beckmann Retrospective." Take, for example, "Political Philosophy or Nihilist Science?" In this article written originally for the Jaffa Festschrift sandwiched in-between shining examples of the political philosophy which Neumann has called "jackass worship," is the piece mentioned above on nihilist science. In this essay we are told that Straussians, including the man the volume is dedicated to, Harry Jaffa, are still engaged in the futile venture of trying to rescue political philosophy from the nihilism at its core. While these pseudo-scientists struggle to comprehend the dialogue between ancients and moderns or philosophy and politics, they neglect the only thing worthy of serious consideration. The vital question is the choice between nihilism or political philosophy. This question, it must be admitted, is one not even seriously considered by the Straussians, at least not in public at any rate.

Apart from whether Neumann's perspective is in any sense "correct" (he argues that the will to prove nihilism's "rightness" is a lack of integrity), it is nevertheless a dangerous posture to assume in public. In his essay on Max Beckmann (Do nihilists always grimace like stormtroopers?), Neumann asserts that only nihilist science deserves to be taught to the young -- that any other quest for wisdom is defective or intellectually dishonest. In an age where our polity is seriously challenged by forces threatening to tear it apart, nihilism's "nothing-is-forbidden, all-is-permitted" doctrine seems almost perverse. But as educators, Neumann suggests, we have a duty to seek out the holiest, in-

deed only, truth. In all fairness to Neumann, his colleagues have a tremendously oversimplified view of the monster nihilism, finding it in places like impressionist paintings, B movies, etc. This oversimplification of a complex issue is the other extreme of Neumann's indignation over his colleague's simpering answer to his student's request for genuine knowledge.

But is nihilist science genuine knowledge? If so, ought this wisdom to be disseminated publicly? These are the real issues. Ultimately, Neumann's claims regarding nihilist science are as groundless as those of the pseudo-sciences that he indicts; particularly Thomism and Christianity. In other words, Neumann's arguments, as tantalizing a description as they may seem to our sometimes despondent culture, are simply assertions. We might just as well assume that Christian Science's *Weltanschauung* is an accurate representation of reality, as opposed to nihilist science, for all the demonstrative proof we have of either. Besides all this -- and perhaps this was Strauss's reason for his inability to reject revelation in the face of nihilism's claims -- Christianity allows room for hope. Even were we to accept Neumann's nihilism in our heart of hearts, it is hardly a doctrine on which to base a political society. Since all selection of principles to live by is presumably random anyway, then why not choose Winston Churchill's option? In 1948, in Norway, Churchill said:

> The flame of Christian ethics is still our best guide. Its animation and accomplishment is a practical necessity, both spiritually and materially ... The accomplishments of Christian ethics in our daily life is the final and greatest word which has ever been said. Only on this basis can we reconcile the rights of the individual with the demands of a society in a manner which alone can bring happiness and peace to humanity.

We must never allow room for that public despair which is so fatal to the existence of a political community. Such despair is at the heart of nihilism. After all, Churchill had seen nihilism's abyss and rejected it. To him it was a peculiar secularized hell. The difference with Neumann's nihilistic hell is that he inverts the old Christian notion. Rather than try to avoid the nihilist's hell, one longs for its maw, and an existence of superfluity.

Neumann must be addressed. It is no use pretending that his ideas and their grounding in the reflections of his forefathers are not there; the potency of his ideas is far greater than the mere reveries he claims

they are. Nihilism is knocking on the door of America. And once America's proud spirit is extinguished, that last best hope of mankind, what remains?

-- *Paul A. Basinski*

Harry Neumann's Response:

Since around 1980 I have defended nihilism in various publications. Here I want to state and answer objections by Basinski and others. First (I), nihilism's meaning is given; then (II), the objections and my answers.

I

Nihilism means that nothing -- and only nothing! -- has an identity or nature, a being not subject to radical change at any moment. No natural or divine support exists to reinforce the common-sense faith that anything is more than nothing. Nothing is more than what it experiences or what is experienced about it. Nothing is more than empty experiences (thoughts, perceptions, feelings, etc.), impressions as Hume called them. Nihilism is not solipsism nor does it make man the measure of all things. The nihilist "self" or "man" which experiences its "world" is itself no more than empty impressions. It too is nothing.

II

Objection: If nihilism is true, is it not itself another empty impression?

Answer: Yes.

Objection: Is it not contradictory to say that nihilism is both true and yet nothing more than an arbitrary impression, a mere prejudice?

Answer: Yes.

Objection: Does not this prove it false?

Answer: No. Any faith in anything's being something rather than nothing, any desire to live rather than die, is self-contradictory. The

self that it contradicts -- anything's true self! -- is reality's nothingness. Life in all its manifestations is, and must be, self-contradictory. Refusal to acknowledge its self- contradictory character is at the heart of all mankind's self- delusions or prejudices, especially of all moral-political passions ("values"). Bigotry is unavoidable for men (or beasts) determined to be something rather than nothing!

Objection: Why are empty experiences nothing? However arbitrary or meaningless they are, must there not be something or someone to experience them?

Answer: No. The faith that this or anything else must be so is itself nothing but another empty experience. This includes faith in any distinctions, including those between truth and falsity, right and wrong, arbitrary and non-arbitrary, freedom and slavery.

Objection: Then the claim that everything is nothing is itself nothing? The claim that everything is arbitrary impressions itself is arbitrary?

Answer: Yes -- as well as any claim or desire to be or to do anything.

Objection: Does not your claim that nihilism is true require a nonarbitrary distinction between truth and falsity?

Answer: No. The gist of your objections implies that genuine communication and community is possible. It implies that the "we" who communicate and "things" communicated -- including this exchange! -- are more than nothing. In reality they are meaningless impressions, dreams whose dreamers are themselves dreams.

Objection: Why communicate then?

Answer: There is as little nonarbitrary reason to communicate as to do anything. All striving to do or be anything arises from a nihilist will to overpower nihilism, the will of nothing to be more than nothing. Like everything else that will is nothing.

Objection: What about science? philosophy? liberal education? moral excellence? civilization itself?

Answer: Genuinely liberal education liberates from the uplifting propaganda ("consciousness raising") which makes those things, or anything else, appear to be more than empty impressions. That propaganda is a travesty of genuine education or science. The main goal of

any truly academic philosopher should be to oppose the always-powerful, pseudo-academic forces spreading this propaganda.

Objection: Is your opposition to this propaganda, as you call it, more than nothing?

Answer: No.

Objection: Then why oppose one nothing to another?

Answer: There is no more reason to do this than to do anything else. Any effort to be or do anything is self-contradictory. In this universal aimlessness, "I" will to make "myself" and my "students" as aware as possible of the truth about "themselves" and their "world" or "worlds." This always unwelcome confrontation seems to me to be the goal of any academic institution worthy of the name. I realize that this confrontation, genuine self- knowledge, is not immune to life's basic nothingness. Yet it is preferable to the cowardly effort of pseudo-academics to bury themselves in established "disciplines" or "methodologies" and thus avoid confronting the harsh truth about themselves and their world.

Objection: Can anything be really preferable in a nihilist world?

Answer: No -- nor more true or more real.

Objection: That means that any savage aware of reality's void is, solely by virtue of this awareness, as scientific -- as knowledgeable about reality -- as an Aristotle, a Newton, or an Einstein?

Answer: Yes, even more knowledgeable if that savage realized, as they evidently did not, the impossibility of genuine communication -- especially of scientific findings.

Objection: Is there no nonarbitrary reason for condemning a Lenin, a Hitler, or a Khomeini? Do such monsters really know as much about science or education as a Socrates or an Einstein?

Answer: No nonarbitrary reason exists for anything. Nobody's moral-political passions ("values") are more than empty prejudices. Strongly political or moral men use all available force and propaganda to discredit opposing prejudices ("values"). Life is a war of conflicting bigotries. Nothing is more bigoted -- and thus more effective politically and morally -- than the claim to want to be free of bigotry! The desire to obtain impartial, impersonal findings is either self-delusion or moral-political propaganda.

Objection: All this makes sense only if reality is nihilist. Perhaps it is, but why are you so sure? Why not be an agnostic instead of an atheist?

Answer: You touch the crucial point. Here the paths of men part. Either you believe (1) that nothing, including yourself, is more than what is experienced about it or (2) that things, including yourself, exist in themselves apart from what is experienced about them. To me, it is obvious that there are only experiences or impressions but no "things" or "beings" apart from experience. So far as I can see, neither side can "disprove" the other to the other's satisfaction. Their conflict concerns what constitutes the first principle, the basic premise, of any proof about anything.

Objection: What is obvious to you denies common sense and is, as such, crazy.

Answer: Common sense and craziness, like anything else, are nothing but empty impressions. Your faith in their being more does not make it so.

Objection: Nor does your insistence on reducing them to nothing make it so! Don't you freely admit that your insistence on that (or on anything else) is mere bigotry?

Answer: Yes.

Objection: Even if nihilism is true, is it not wiser politically to publicly maintain a Christian condemnation of it?

Answer: Why Christianity? Like nihilism, Christianity and liberalism invite the same devaluation of political commitment in favor of private salvation however that salvation (happiness, "self-expression") is interpreted. Both Christians and liberals experience themselves primarily as private individuals, not as patriotic citizens prepared to fight their enemies at home (civil war) and abroad. How can one hate the Russians and Chinese as enemies, if one sees them as children of the same god or as individuals endowed with the same rights as one's self to life and liberty? Then one's main concern is to have dialogues or business dealings or summit conferences or joint prayer to enlighten them about our common humanity -- anything to avoid the harsh political decision to hate them as enemies! This encourages the popular Christian-liberal distinction between Russia's leaders, who may be our enemies, and the Russian people who are, or ought to be, free individu-

als like ourselves and with whom we therefore have no quarrel. Unlike Americans who are educated -- that is, indoctrinated -- to accept such distinctions as gospel truth, the Russians view them as effective propaganda ploys in their on-going war with America. Contrast the magnitude of American Christian-liberal protest against our wars in Vietnam or Central America with the lack of any effective Russian opposition to their wars in Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1969), Poland and Afghanistan. Unless Afghans accept Russian rule, the Russians place no value on sharing a common humanity with them! For Russian policy is political, not Christian or liberal. Christian-liberal policies may bring victory in heaven or in wars against poverty. Insofar as anything is predictable in a nihilist world, they surely will bring political -- that is, military -- disaster.

In reality's void, all choices are arbitrary. I choose to encourage political, rather than Christian-liberal, decisions by Americans. They should be educated to realize that their political enemies at home and abroad cannot be their private friends. If Russia is to be defeated, Americans must be taught to think politically, not privately.

The heart of politics is not prudent or pious calculation of private interest. Prudence is only a means to political ends. The heart of politics or morality is clear in General Spears's description of the spirit informing Clemenceau's life and death.[2] When the French forces were awaiting Ludendorff's attack in 1918, they had left a large zone in front of their main line garrisoned by a few troops with orders to stand and die (in order to trick the Germans into believing that this was the main French force). Clemenceau visited the doomed troops.

> He spoke to them in his gruff way, not minimizing the sacrifice being asked of them. Their fate would have been his had he had his way, and the men knew it. They said nothing but presented him with a bouquét of such wild flowers as grow on the parapets of trenches ... Clemenceau, who was the toughest, the hardest and perhaps the most cruel man I have ever met, who had but one love, France, sobbed ... When he died, that faded posy was found in his desk with the instruction that when he was buried standing, as was his wish, it should be placed over his heart.

Paul Basinski: A Reply to Harry Neumann:

Neumann is a radical historicist. Unlike Nietzsche, he appears unconcerned with destroying "the protective atmosphere within which life or culture or action is alone possible."[3]

Life or the truth, never both, said Nietzsche. Neumann asserts that he has chosen the truth -- let life be damned. However, as his reply suggests, his deliberate acceptance and promotion of nihilism as a doctrine is itself a political activity, albeit one he chooses to couch in terms like arbitrary, meaningless, etc. By betraying his original purposeless or nihilistic intent, Neumann demonstrates how we all choose life, so long as the will to live is in us. Sadly, Neumann's half-hearted nihilism cannot lead to a better or more moral existence. It leads to a plane where acts like shoving elderly women down stairs (as his teacher Schopenhauer did) or butchering innocent lives by the millions (his "bigoted" pseudo-nihilist Nazis) cannot be distinguished from one another.

Finally, Neumann's assumption is incorrect that Christianity's global piety devalues public commitment, making it less able to defend itself from aggression. As Clemenceau sent untold numbers to their death in 1918, so another pugnacious fighter, himself a Christian, was responsible for the deaths of thousands in World War II. But rather than suggest such slaughter was meaningless politics, Winston Churchill chose the protecting atmosphere that makes death in battle glorious, and shelters political society from the storm that half-hearted nihilists like Neumann might wish on it.

Churchill had a will to survive and never surrender, but reconciled this spiritedness with Christian compassion. It was this combination of piety and martial valor that informed Britain's efforts in that island's darkest hour. Churchill agreed, Nazism must be crushed, but: "I will not say without mercy, because God forbid we should ever part company with that -- but at any rate with zeal and not altogether without relish."[4] (One last note. The volume of Spears that Neumann cites is, in fact, dedicated to Winston Churchill.)

Harry Neumann's Rejoinder:

No man can avoid nihilism or be a half-hearted nihilist. Everything (including all moral-political dreams) is nothing but empty impressions. Our only difference is Basinski's need, shared by most Christian-liberal

academics, to hide his nihilist nakedness behind "the protective atmosphere" of humanitarian fig leaves. I prefer Kierkegaard's frank admission that Christian faith in salvation from reality's nothingness is a desperate leap into the impossible! In any case, the need for those fig leaves is as arbitrary as anything else. Liberal education is the always-repellent effort at liberation from that need. Intellectual honesty is as unwelcome and probably as impossible as Kierkegaard's faith. Life is a war of conflicting faiths or prejudices. Its inherent bigotry is compounded by the illusion that one's political or academic cause really promotes "a better or more moral existence." Such claims are either self-delusion or propaganda.

If one subtracts Basinski's need for those fig leaves, we are not so opposed. Like my nihilism, his Christianity or liberalism devalues American resolve to win the war against Russia (like most professors, Basinski never mentions that war). Churchill noted[5] that Chamberlain's Christian abhorrence of war encouraged Great Britain's decay into the mini-Britain of appeasement and Munich: "It is baffling to reflect that what men call honor does not correspond always to Christian ethics." For Christians or liberals, war is honorable only when it does not hamper personal salvation (contrast Matthew 16:26 with Psalm 137) or when it is a war to end all wars. To paraphrase Machiavelli: However patriotic they may seem, they actually love their souls (or selves) more than their fatherland. Patriotic nihilists, on the other hand, are permeated by the realization that nothing in heaven or on earth except their own desperate resolve sustains their patriotism. It was in tribute to this resolve that Clemenceau's heart was covered with that faded bouquet, not with a Christian cross or a humanitarian manifesto.

Chapter 4

Responsible and Irresponsible Liberalism: Dostoevsky's Stavrogin

How are we to satisfy ourselves that something is not appallingly irresponsible? To be intellectually responsible is not the easiest thing in the world and I can only attempt to make certain steps in that direction here.[1]

Genuine liberalism inspires suicidal boredom or murderous rage in those unable to endure it. That is the experience of Stavrogin in Dostoevsky's Possessed. He realizes that liberalism's liberation severs all ties with the moralities determining good and evil in mankind's herds. By nature there is only the individual free of all moral-political obligations. Transformation of radically liberated individuals into citizens requires obfuscation of the nihilism responsible for their anarchic freedom.[2] This obfuscation sparks intellectual irresponsibility, the hallmark of political liberalism and of all contemporary "liberation" movements. Stavrogin despises this obfuscation.

Stavrogin's contempt is as rare as the intellectual responsibility sparking it. Its rarity does not arise from any difficulty in grasping that liberalism's nihilism is the truth. It is its emptiness that makes it so hard to accept. Genuine liberalism is grounded in the readily available insight that nothing is anything apart from its being experienced. Everything -- a self, a world, the law of contradiction, the distinction between truth and falsity, good and evil -- is only experience of it. Apart from experience, there are no selves or minds which experience or things to be experienced.

All that exists or can exist are random, essentially unconnected experiences, "impressions" as Hume called them. This nihilism informs Stavrogin's liberalism. Its truth is as self-evident as is the impossibility of demonstrating it to most men. However obvious, nihilist insight

must be rejected by them to sustain their common sense need for community and communication.

What is clearer than the impossibility of experiencing anything but experiences! Nothing gives anything an extra-experiential being. A cave man grasping this knew all there is to know. Philosophic faith in "progress" beyond his knowledge arises from the need for illusions to mask nihilism. Although reality's nihilism always is evident, nothing is more repellent to moral-political respectability. Reduction of this respectability to nothing is heart-breaking.

Common sense or what Nietzsche called "the herd instinct" prevents intellectual honesty. All rational inquiry is grounded either in this dishonesty or in frank recognition of reality's nihilism. Neither alternative can be "demonstrated" since each provides the basic principle of all demonstration. What seems intellectual responsibility to a Stavrogin must appear as obvious nonsense, appalling irresponsibility, to men terrified by nihilism's empty privacy.

The herd instinct's illusions persuade men (and beasts) that they have, apart from experience, identities or selves sharing a world in which and about which communication, not merely empty noise, is possible. Since reality is nothing but experience devoid of substance, all communication is, in fact, empty noise.

In this article I occasionally place quotation marks around words to indicate that they communicate nothing. Consistency would require quotation marks around all efforts to communicate. But consistency matters as little as anything else in reality's void. In any case, Stavrogin's candid liberalism is moved by realization that nihilism is the basic premise of genuine thought.

In ancient-medieval thought, that is, prior to thinkers such as Hume and Nietzsche, liberalism either was unknown or dismissed as immoral nonsense. Ancient-medieval thought was enslaved by faith in god. By "god" I mean anything intended to bestow non-arbitrary substance on reality -- e.g., Plato's idea of the good, Aristotle's active intellect, Epicurus' atoms, Augustine's god, etc. Faith in "god" precludes intellectual honesty.

Even modern thinkers, including Hume and Nietzsche, find it difficult, perhaps impossible, to do without god. The need to be more than nothing is responsible for Hume's dependence on custom, Nietzsche's hope for a superman, Jefferson's faith in human rights and Marxist dreams of a universal classless society. This need informs pseudo-liberalism, half-hearted liberation from common sense's moral-political illusions. Pseudo-liberalism's intellectual irresponsibility is grounded in its

craving to make liberalism socially acceptable. It transforms liberalism's apolitical, nihilist bent into something politically presentable.

That transformation's consequences are spelled out in the Possessed by Peter Stepanovitch who gloats over his successful politicizing of liberalism:

> Our party does not consist only of those who commit arson or murder, fire off pistols in the traditional fashion or bite colonels. They are only a hindrance ... a teacher who laughs with children at their god and at their cradle is on our side ... the schoolboys who murder a peasant for the sake of sensation are ours. The juries who acquit every criminal are ours. The prosecutor who trembles at a trial for fear he should not seem advanced enough is ours, ours. Among intellectuals we have lots, lots and they don't know it themselves ... When I left Russia, Littre's dictum that crime is insanity was all the rage; I come back and find that crime is no longer insanity, but simply common sense, almost a duty; anyway a gallant protest ... One or two generations of vice are essential now; monstrous abject vice by which men are transformed into loathsome, cruel, egotistic reptiles ... Do you know that serfs had more integrity and self respect than intellectuals? Though they were beaten, they always preserved their religion which is more than intellectuals do ...[3]

Attempting to cloak freedom in moral respectability, Kant insisted that all men of good will, all men dedicated to human liberation, welcome the French Revolution's goals, however they deplore revolutionist means.[4] The swindle in Kant's -- or anyone else's -- moralization of freedom would be clear had he not qualified will by calling it good-men of will, not men of good (or bad) will. Will as such, emancipated from all divine or natural restraint, is liberalism. If will really could be good or evil, it would be subject to moral-political evaluation. Such evaluation is groundless in a nihilist world.

It is not as if moral restraints need to be overcome by rebellion against natural or divine laws -- laws of nature or nature's god as the Declaration of Independence puts it. In a world of meaningless impressions, there is literally nothing to overcome. Stavrogin's awareness of the void created by liberalism and its liberal education makes all efforts at moral-political respectability nauseating. His liberalism is too honest to demand its "rights." It prevents him as it prevented Nietzsche, from

parading his intellectual honesty as morally uplifting ("consciousness-raising"). Liberal education's basic lesson, its nihilism, destroys serious dedication to securing rights or fulfilling duties. Stavrogin's depth of insight, his genuine liberalism, is not to be confused with the mindless (moral- political) histrionics usually associated with "liberalism."

Liberal education informs nihilist, apolitical knowledge, not knowledge capable of being communicated, learned or taught. In reality's nothingness, there can be no meaningful community or communication; there is nothing to learn and nobody to teach. This nihilism manifests itself in Stavrogin's defiance of common sense and, especially of its main concern, the striving to be happy, to get what is good for oneself. This drive requires a world in which it makes sense. Stavrogin's whole being is permeated by the realization that no such world exists.

When Captain Lebyadkin recalls Stavrogin's remark that "one must really be a great man to defy common sense," Stavrogin adds: "Yes, and a fool as well."[5] Common sense finds nothing more inane than intellectual responsibility: "The highest courage of the knower shows itself not where he inspires wonder and terror ... but where he must be experienced by the ignorant as superficial, low, cowardly and trivial."[6]

Nothing strikes common sense as less true than truth's nihilism. Common sense creates the illusions bestowing "reality" on its world. Consciously or unconsciously it creates faith in something like miracle working gods, beings capable of making something out of nothing. *Ex nihilo* creation, traditional Christianity's central doctrine, always was at the heart of common sense. Radical protestant de-mythologizing is alive to this crucial theological point:

> De-mythologizing is the radical application of the doctrine of justification by faith to the sphere of knowledge and thought ... there is no difference between security based on good works and security built on objectifying knowledge. The believer in god must know that he has nothing at his own disposal on which to build his faith, that he is, so to speak, in a void.[7]

Nietzsche, who saw himself as "Europe's first perfect nihilist," knew what nihilism and Christianity had in common. Deprived of its faith in miraculous salvation, common sense would be confronted with its own mendacity. Lacking the courage for this confrontation, most

men cannot really be liberal. Their intellectual cowardice is responsible for the frantic contemporary plunge into creativity (humanities) and technology (sciences).

Whatever their views on religion, political liberals presuppose omnipotent redemption from nihilism. This conscious, but more often unconscious, need for redemption is self-delusion. In his suicide note, Stavrogin accounts for its overwhelming popularity: "On a log one may cross a river but not on a chip."[8] Candid acknowledgement of reality's nihilism cannot compete with common sense's "stimulating" panaceas.

Stavrogin is bored to death, finding no relief from hopeless lethargy in dreams of *ex nihilo* creation. He cannot participate in Nietzsche's suppression of intellectual honesty for the sake of "creativity." For Nietzsche, Stavrogin's attitude springs from egotism: "Of course I would much prefer to be a Basel professor than god, but I have not dared to push my private egotism so far as to abandon the creation of the world for its sake."[9] Nietzsche's determination to do the impossible, to make something out of reality's nothing, precludes Stavrogin's honesty. It reflects the cowardly need to domesticate liberalism by masking its horror in moral-political respectability. Stavrogin's liberalism remains adamantly undomesticated.

To be sure, Stavrogin, in his defiance of common sense, is capable of a kind of heroics but

> without the slightest thrill of enjoyment, languidly, even with *ennui* and entirely from unpleasant necessity ... There was much malignant anger in Stavrogin ... but it was a calm, cold, reasonable anger and therefore the most revolting and most terrible possible.[10]

That hatred is grounded in unwillingness to embrace common-sense's illiberal illusions. It triggers the only serious human conflict, the war of desire against reason (insight into life's nihilism). All passions are teleological, striving to achieve some end (good), and therefore irrational. Passions subsist on illiberalism's faith in a world of goods to pursue and selves to pursue them.

Moral indignation, anger at whatever frustrates the goal of desire (to secure what is good) is fueled by this frustration. In an illiberal world, reason (philosophy) restrains some passions and encourages others, subordinating them all to what it perceives as best. Here the rational goal of passion is the true good -- what truly is good for oneself -- sought, unconsciously, even by the lower passions which must be com-

pelled by reason to see what they really want. Thus, for illiberalism, there is, in principle, a harmony of reason and passion. Not so in Stavrogin's genuine liberalism and its scientific (nihilist) devaluation of all desires, a devaluation revealing the groundlessness of all good and evil, that is, of politics and, therefore, of philosophy.

Depriving the desires -- any desire -- of their goal, that nihilist devaluation makes them arbitrary, meaningless. This liberal (scientific) realization is responsible for Stavrogin's malignant, rational anger and for Nietzsche's contempt for "man insofar as he desires or is desirable -- and, in general, for all desirabilities, all ideals of man." Desire thrives on illiberal delusion (politics, morality, religion, philosophy), the faith in a world of desired goods and selves to desire them -- and to fight over them.

Conflict arises from frustration of the passion to get what is good for oneself and one's moral-political cause. Strauss notes that "spiritedness arises out of the desire proper being resisted or thwarted. Spiritedness is needed for overcoming the resistance to the satisfaction of the desire. Hence spiritedness is a desire for victory ... Being secondary in comparison with desire, spiritedness is in the service of desire." In illiberal (political-philosophic) thought, this anger or indignation can serve to subordinate less rational needs to more rational ones ("rational" here means "good").

To be sure, philosophy's inadequate grasp of what really is good makes it difficult, perhaps impossible, for reason to adequately discriminate between higher and lower desires and thus makes spiritedness' defense of desire ambiguous. No such problem arises for liberal science which undercuts all desire. This nihilism sparks desire's suicidal hostility against reason. Like Moby Dick's Ahab, desire and its spiritedness want to kill that monster (science) or die trying. The original Ahab (I Kings, 21), in his resolve to satisfy his desire for Naboth's property, committed crimes for which he was condemned by god and his prophet. For Melville's liberal Ahab, as for Stavrogin, nothing is a crime because nothing is desirable: god is dead!

In their liberal hell, spiritedness which "overcomes the resistance to the satisfaction of the desire" must overcome reality (nature) itself. This is the "goal" of science since Bacon and Descartes. In Stavrogin, as in Nietzsche's superman, that spiritedness, the spirit of revenge, is not transcended, but apotheosized. It becomes a "calm, cold reasonable anger and therefore the most revolting and most terrible possible." Spiritedness, moral indignation against the frustration of desire, be-

comes the will to power, the will to overpower liberal education and the nihilist desperation created by it.

Thus Captain Ahab, a liberal Achilles, hates Moby Dick, the personification of "all truth with malice in it." To the illiberalism informing all desire, truth always is malicious, that is, liberal. Ahab sees in Moby Dick liberalism's annihilation of his comforting illiberal illusions:

> He pitted himself, all mutilated, against it. All that most maddens and torments; all that stirs up the lees of things; all truth with malice in it; all that cracks the sinews and cakes the brain; all the subtle demonisms of life and thought; all evil, to crazy Ahab, were visibly personified, and made practically assailable in Moby Dick. He piled upon the whale's white hump the sum of all the general rage and hate felt by the whole race from Adam down; and then, as if his chest had been a mortar, he burst his hot heart's shell upon it.

The malice springing from truth, from a genuinely liberal education, triggers the hopeless fury of illiberalism but only when illiberals are willing to be honest with themselves, that is, when they become alive to their annihilation by liberalism. Unable to endure that Hell, illiberalism, now aware of its bankruptcy, commands only satanic (pseudo-liberal) weapons. Satan's honesty precludes disguising this hate, spite and vindictiveness with pseudo-liberal nonsense about "diversity awareness," "consciousness raising" and, in general, defense of mankind ("personkind") against the bigotry of "special interests." Reflecting "no light but rather darkness visible" his words have a grandeur lacking in that cheap, and therefore politically effective, groveling:

> What though the field be lost?
> All is not lost; the unconquerable Will;
> And study of revenge, immortal hate,
> And courage never to submit or yield:
> And what is else not to be overcome?[11]

Reflecting the blindness of illiberal (ancient-medieval) thought, Satan, like Ahab, still enjoys the luxury of taking his "self" and its rebellion seriously. Here they resemble the various contemporary "liberation" movements, although they are too honest to believe that

they liberate to anything but immortal hate and revenge. Unlike either more (Ahab, Satan) or less (political liberals) honest pseudo- liberals, Stavrogin's rage is rational, triggered by science, knowledge of reality. He knows that neither god nor moral-political oppression are responsible for that rage which springs solely from desire's inevitable hatred of reason.

Unlike Ahab or Satan, Stavrogin knows that his real and only enemy is his own reason. His spiritedness, the slave of his now discredited passions, is resolved to destroy reason (science) or die trying. Contemporary pseudo-liberal crusades, whether against war, racism, sexism, homophobia, etc., are contemptible, unworthy of serious attention, precisely because they refuse to realize that their only enemy is their own liberal, liberating reason, their drive to liberate "personkind." Their rebellion's real target is a reason responsible for the fury of passions deprived by liberalism of the pious histrionics necessary to sustain them. Their main contemporary ally is not liberal education, scientific enlightenment, but Khomeini's pious persecution of it! But self-knowledge, intellectual responsibility, is a poison pseudo-liberals find too hard to swallow.

In a discussion with a pseudo-liberal, a "liberator" who created (with diabolic assistance) the first test-tube baby, Goethe's Faust describes the fate of honest liberals:

> What stupidity is usually called knowledge! Who dares to call that monster by its right name? The few who really knew something about it and were foolish enough not to restrain their full heart but revealed their feeling and insight to the deluded have always been crucified and burned.[12]

In Death in Venice, the enlightened, and therefore rabid, passions take a terrible vengeance on the intellectual candor responsible for their emancipation. Political liberalism's retreat to vestiges of ancient-medieval soporifics arises from fear of the passionate retribution which destroyed a Stavrogin (suicide), an Aschenbach (moral collapse) or a Nietzsche (insanity). Political liberalism is liberalism's fear of itself: "To be intellectually responsible is not the easiest thing in the world."

Stavrogin's truthfulness compels him to flounder aimlessly between suicidal lethargy and murderous rage. Disdaining domestication of liberalism, he knows that any attempt to communicate meaningfully -- including the present paper -- is delusion. His suicide is punishment for refusal to participate in this swindle. Aware that his refusal is no

less empty than the swindle, he could not seriously entertain the pedagogic zeal driving Spinell in Mann's Tristan:

> The world is full of what I call the 'unconscious type' and I cannot stand it, all these unconscious types! I cannot stand all this dumb, unknowing uncomprehending life and action, this world of infuriating naivete around me! It tortures me, driving me irresistibly to explain, to articulate all existence, to bring it to self- consciousness so far as I can ... unconcerned whether the consequences are helpful or harmful, whether it brings relief or intensifies the pain.[13]

Chapter 5

Leo Strauss or Nihilism? The Case Against Politics

To Gottfried Benn's Confrontation with Politics (1886-1956)

> *In the last fifteen years I have been branded a swine by the nazis, an idiot by the communists, an intellectual prostitute by the democrats ... a pathological nihilist by the religious ... The decline of the West is, I believe, not really caused by totalitarian systems or S.S. crimes, also not by material poverty or the Gottwalds or Molotovs, but by the dog-like grovelling (hundische Kriechen) of its intelligence before political concepts. The zoon politikon, that Greek blunder ... that is the germ of the decline.*[1]

The first part (I) of this paper recapitulates my defense of nihilism or atheism. The second (II) describes the alternative to nihilism, were there one. Since none exists, the second part accounts for falsity or intellectual fraud. In reality's nihilism the desire to account for anything is dishonest. There is nothing to cause and nothing to be caused; there are no facts only interpretations -- of nothing by nothing. This universal insignificance and accidentalness might be stressed by the awkward expedient of placing quotation marks around all attempts at communication or community. Assume this invisible punctuation throughout my account of nihilism (I) and the intellectual farce responsible for its rejection (II).

The illusion of an alternative to nihilism is created by common sense and its faith in causation or responsibility. This illusory faith arises from man's political drives, the herd instinct as Nietzsche called it: "Morality is the herd instinct in the individual."[2] I do not consider

the paper's two sections equally important. The first states the truth about science, genuine knowledge of reality, insofar as it can be stated. The second more fully shares the fraudulence of science's rejection or replacement by pseudo-science -- the decision to view anything, including science, as more than nothing and therefore to seek its causes. I realize that this paper, particularly its second part, participates in this swindle.

Given this realization, I argue that homesickness, conscious or unconscious craving for pre-scientific political rootedness provokes hatred of science's nihilism. It perpetuates the hoax that politics is more than nothing. I mean by politics the delusion that non-arbitrary, meaningful community or communication can exist. I include under politics everything inspired by this delusion; e.g., morality, religion, philosophy. Their essentially political orientation is manifest in their common homesickness[3] to which genuine science is as revolting as Mr. Hyde was to Doctor Jekyll! Science plunges the heart of their lives, their yearning for community and communication, into an abyss. Throughout this paper, science means a nihilism or atheism destructive of politics -- except when placed in quotation marks to distinguish pseudo-science from it.

Inability to endure scientific enlightenment sparks all lesser, more popular varieties of prejudice or discrimination. Nietzsche observes this cowardice even in sense perception: "We construct a new picture that we see immediately with the help of old experiences which we have made according to the degree of our honesty and justice. There are no experiences beside moral ones even in the realm of sense perception."[4]

Everything human is political and therefore falsifies reality. This universal quackery makes science abhorrent or ridiculous to politics. In philosophy, its most intellectual guise, politics demands an indirect, esoteric mode of communication. Its main advocate in this century was Leo Strauss.

I

Nihilism means that nothing has an identity or nature, a being not subject to radical, random change or obliteration at any moment. No divine or natural support exists for the common sense faith that anything is more than nothing. Nothing is more than what it experiences or what is experienced about it. There is nothing in, behind or above things to make them more than empty experiences (thoughts, perceptions, moods, feelings, etc.), impressions as Hume called them. Thus

there would be no change of substance if men devolved into insects (Kafka) or apes evolved into men (Darwin). Evolution, devolution or annihilation involve no real change since neither men nor insects nor anything else is anything but the nothingness of empty experience. Nothing prevents anything from changing or being changed into anything else or into the nothing which everything always is.

Science, genuine knowledge of reality, is readily available always and everywhere. It involves nothing complicated or sophisticated. Not science, but its propaganda or window dressing, has sparked so-called knowledge or information explosions requiring ever greater technological specialization. Encouraging the illusion of meaning and purpose in a nihilism devoid of them, science's propaganda mesmerizes its devotees with the delusion that they are doing something when, in reality, there is nothing to do and nobody to do it. Science's propaganda inspires confidence in the lie that science is politically salutary.

Being a self, being something rather than nothing is illusory in reality's emptiness. Any desire to be something, to live rather than die, is self-contradictory. The self contradicted by it -- anything's true self! -- is reality's nothingness. The love of death informing Wagner's (and Mann's) Tristan indicates an intellectual probity lacking in men positing the primacy of fear of death (Hobbes) or desire for self-preservation (Locke). This dishonesty is at the core of all mankind's self-deceptions or prejudices. Bigotry or self-contradiction is unavoidable for anything determined to believe that it is something and not nothing.

Genuine science or liberal education liberates from the uplifting propaganda which makes anything appear other than empty impressions, dreams whose dreamers are themselves dreams. Life is a war of conflicting prejudices. Nothing is more bigoted -- and thus more effective politically -- than the claim to want to be free of bigotry! The desire to obtain impartial, impersonal findings is either self-delusion or propaganda. It has nothing to do with science!

Awareness of reality's nihilism animates modern, as distinct from ancient, science. Here "ancient" and "modern" are not meant mainly in a historical-temporal sense. For any pre-historic cave-man alive to reality's nothingness was far more scientific than modern pseudo-scientists naive enough to believe that they really have selves capable of communicating and findings to be communicated. Science knows no non-arbitrary, non-bigoted communication or community. It realizes that faith in historicism, historical conditioning, is as inane as any effort to determine guilt or place responsibility.

This nihilist realization is decisive for modern, as distinct from ancient, science. For the ancients, there was no science as such. Instead there was Aristotelian or Stoic or Epicurean etc. science. Each of the opposing "sciences" were subordinate to some god, some metaphysical-theological notion of man's highest good. As Plato put it, the Good (or idea of the Good) was the highest object of knowledge. Different ultimate goods or gods led to different "sciences." In the preface to his Beyond Good and Evil, Nietzsche rejected all ancient "sciences" by repudiating platonic faith in an absolute good and a mind capable of knowing it ("the worst, the most enduring, the most dangerous dogmatic error"). Unlike most so-called modern scientists, Nietzsche saw that the break with ancient "sciences" and their gods meant nihilism.

In that nihilism, nothing -- and only nothing! -- is true, everything is permitted. Everything is open to radical technological experimentation or humanist creativity. Science makes possible this godless, unrestrained technology or creativity. Science and the humanities share the same nihilist core. Far from building on ancient "sciences" or being their further, more rational development, modern science means their unqualified rejection. Their basically political orientation is meaningless for science's nihilism.

Nietzsche knew that science's unlimited experimentation actually meant one crucial experiment, if anything can be crucial for science. He realized that this experiment might annihilate mankind. It seriously questions whether truth can be incorporated into life without destroying it. Is science or intellectual honesty possible?

> In relation to the importance of this struggle all else is trivial. The final question about the conditions of life is raised here and the first attempt is here made to answer this question experimentally: How far does the truth permit incarnation (*Einverleibung*)? -- that is the question, that is the experiment." Can men grasp life's nothingness without destroying themselves? "We are making an experiment with the truth. Perhaps mankind will be destroyed by it! Fine![5]

The answer to this or any question or experiment was given by Kierkegaard, one of the very few authentic scientists, in his frank admission that his faith in Christian incarnation was a desperate leap into the impossible. Like all honest desire to be something rather than nothing, Kierkegaard's faith springs from a desperation inspired by science. He realized that truth cannot be incarnated because there is noth-

ing to incarnate or to be incarnated. Benn observed this futility in a letter (September 30, 1934) to Ina Seidel: "I am certain that intelligence (*Geist*) and art do not come from victorious but from broken natures; also that there can be no practical application, no actualization (*Verwirklichung*). There is only form and thought. This is a realization that you do not find in Nietzsche or he hid it. His blond beast, his writings on education, always are still dreams about unifying intelligence and political power ... A man may deceive himself as long as he can. When he can no longer do so, the end has come." It apparently never comes for pseudo-scientists and academics. Their delight in science's propaganda (politics) transforms the horrors of unlimited technology or creativity into "stimulating," "exciting" intellectual novelties. This glorification of mindless stimulation and excitement springs from intellectual cowardice, conscious or unconscious unwillingness to confront science's nihilism.

The liberal terror against which this intellectual pabulum fortifies pseudo-scientists is evident in Dostoyevsky's Kirillov who cannot endure a life which is nothing but empty impressions, words or thoughts devoid of substance: "All my life I did not want it to be only words. I lived because I did not want it to be only that. Even now every day I want it to be not words." Unwilling to immerse himself in the pseudo-academic's stimulating and exciting drivel, Kirillov shares Kierkegaard's desperation. But he cannot bring himself to believe what he knows to be impossible: "God is necessary and so must exist ... But I know that he cannot ... Surely you must understand that a man with two such ideas must kill himself."[6] His teacher, Stavrogin, notes the pseudo-liberal fallacy in this argument: nothing is or must be in science's nihilism. Kirillov's argument for suicide is as arbitrary as anything else in that void which precludes any non-arbitrary "musts" or "shoulds."

Kierkegaard, Kirillov and Nietzsche, unlike Benn, each propose desperate leaps to salvation, although they, like Benn, realize its impossibility. This desperation is the hallmark of honest efforts to be political. Lacking the honesty most political commitments (political liberalism) feel no desperation. To be sure, in reality's emptiness it makes no difference whether one opts for intellectual candor or for the usual pseudo-academic bombast about stimulating, exciting prodigies of creativity or technology. Contemporary transformation of colleges into play pens for this pseudo-liberal frivolity is neither sin nor moral turpitude. Nietzsche's comment about those rejecting his efforts at incarnation of truth applies to Benn and to all men who despise politics

and its quackery: "My teaching is mild against those without faith in it. It has no hell or threats. Those without faith are left with an empty, flighty life in their own consciousness."[7] Benn was haunted by the knowledge that this flighty emptiness is all anyone is or has. All political appeals are impossible leaps, nihilist wills to deny nihilism.

Honest politics realizes its own impossibility. Karl Löwith captured its essence in his description of Heidegger's nazism:

> The spirit of national socialism was not so much concerned with the national and the social but much more with that radically private resoluteness which rejects any discussion or mutual understanding because it relies wholly and only on itself ... At bottom all its concepts and words are the expression of the bitter and hard resoluteness of a will asserting itself in the face of its own nothingness, a will proud of its loathing for happiness, reason and compassion.[8]

Honest efforts at politics threaten not only nazism's fraudulence but that endemic to any politics, whether democratic, nazi or communist. The sham arises from herd-instinct insistence on the primacy of self-preservation over self-annihilation: "What Benn responded to [in nazism] was the catastrophic extremism that underlay the `law and order' of the new regime, the promise of a clean sweep that would stop at nothing, not even self-annihilation."[9] Benn's nihilism despised appeals to law and order, not to self-destructive extremism. Nietzsche observed about his version of Benn's extremism:

> We immoralists -- we are today the only power which needs no allies to win ... We do not even need lies: what other power can succeed without that? A powerful seduction fights for us, the most powerful, perhaps, that there is ... the seduction of the truth ... the truth? ... But I despise this proud word: no, we do not even need the truth ... The sorcery which fights for us ... that is the magic of the extreme, the seduction that everything extreme exercises: we immoralists -- we are the greatest extremists ...

Law and order, prudent avoidance of extremes, means self-preservation, refuge against nihilism's arbitrariness. The conflict between politics and nihilism is one between life and death, self-annihilation and self-preservation. The problem is that science, intellectual probity, is

with nihilism, not with politics. And the will to be political, however honest it is about its inherent dishonesty, is nothing more than the "dog-like grovelling" despised by Benn. The choice is simple but hard: honesty or swindle? Science or politics?

II

That grovelling was really at home only in pre-scientific communities, the families, tribes and cities of the ancient world. In those herds men experienced themselves mainly, if not exclusively, as pious fathers and citizens. There was little, if any, toleration for scientific enlightenment. Birth was not considered accidental but divinely or naturally determined. Indeed the ancient Greek word (*physis*) for birth and nature is the same. When Oedipus demands to know his birth, he is asking about the nature or gods determining his whole life. As in the Antigone, conflicts might arise as to which gods (family or civic) were more authoritative. In Socrates' case, the conflict is between the main athenian political authority (gods) and the right of philosophy to seriously question that authority. Socrates suggested, although he never was sure, that a reason common to all men by nature or birth sanctified (naturalized) his right to question. Both camps agreed that no citizen's birth is "conceived in liberty." Here the individual experienced himself as subordinate to the gods, the main political authorities of his herd. The ancient Greek word for individuals liberated from all communal ties was "idiots." To ancient politics and its thought, science appeared idiotic. Politics and its intellectual purification, philosophy, obfuscate nihilism's phantasmagoric reality.

Although it obviously is impossible to experience anything but experiences, herd instinct faith deceives men into believing that they grasp things which exist as more than empty impressions. However much the herd-instinct may vary in different human and bestial herds, it never is egalitarian; all concerns are not equally important for it. It always inculcates one chief care in all herd members. That care, the nerve of politics, is to get what is good for oneself. It is and presents itself as basically political. What is good is what benefits oneself not as a scientifically enlightened individual but as a herd member. Consequently the question of the good life is the question of the best or ideal state.

For most herd members, the authority of the traditional political gods remained unquestioned. Philosophers turned that unquestioned faith into an opinion open to their investigations. Both unquestioning and questioning herd members accepted as authoritatively true their

certainty that a communal, communicable good existed and that securing it was their most important business. The only difference was that philosophic herd members, as distinct from their unquestioning fellow citizens, did not believe that they knew whether their traditional political authority constituted the true good. Both sides agreed that this authoritative good, whether accepted or questioned, is political and not some encouragement to individual self-expression or self-discovery. Whether philosophic or traditional, ancient life was political; philosophy was political philosophy. Nothing is less honest than the self-knowledge inspired by those pre-scientific herds. Yet it is crucial to realize that philosophy could arise only in them. Science is unhistorical; it surfaces wherever reality's nothingness is grasped. It is possible everywhere and always. Philosophy's emergence, on the other hand, requires a political rootedness, the illiberal faith in the non-arbitrary character of one's birth or nature, no longer available in modern regimes insofar as they become enlightened.

The illiberal hoax perpetrated by that political rootedness makes philosophy seem more than nothing. This essentially political fraud is at the center of the common-sense faith that one lives in a world in which one has a non-arbitrary self capable of communicating meaningfully with other selves. That communication's main object was pious indoctrination or its philosophic questioning.

At the end of his City and Man, Strauss observes the primacy, for philosophy, of "the all important question which is coeval with philosophy, although the philosophers do not frequently pronounce it -- the question *quid sit deus*." Shortly before this observation, Strauss notes the reason for political philosophy's tendency to "not frequently pronounce it": " ... for it the concern with the divine has become identical with philosophy." It was this theological-political naivete that Nietzsche exposed by condemning Plato's absolute good or god as philosophy's most dogmatic hallucination. The piety of the "famous wise men," as Nietzsche called the political philosophers, made science impossible.[10]

Confident that their herd instinct's political world existed by nature or birth, those famous wise men lacked the desperation responsible for Kierkegaardian or Nietzschean extremism. That naivete is central to philosophy and its esotericism. Philosophic esotericism is not basically prudence by intellectuals fearing political reprisal. That scientists are capable of this guile is demonstrated by the immense effectiveness of their propagandistic masking of science's always repellent core. For not even the most repressive Russian tyrant can dispense with science's

military technology, however severely he may wish to persecute candid expressions of science.

A more permissive, American propaganda informs Cartesian pandering to the craving for prolonged, comfortable self- preservation. The problem posed for that craving by science's military propaganda was hardly evident to most grovellers until 1914. Descartes prudently refrains from even alluding to it in his praise of medicine as science's chief blessing:

> As soon as I acquired some general notions concerning physics ... I observed to what point they might lead us and how much they differ from the principles of which we have made use up to the present time. I believed that we could not keep them concealed without greatly sinning against the law which obliges us to procure ... the general good of mankind. For they caused me to see that it is possible to attain knowledge which is very useful in life, and that, instead of the speculative philosophy now taught in the Schools, we may find a practical philosophy by means of which ... we may render ourselves masters and possessors of nature. This is not merely to be desired with a view to the invention of an infinity of arts and crafts which enable us to enjoy without any trouble the fruits of the earth and all the good things to be found there, but also principally because it brings about the preservation of health, which is without doubt the chief blessing and the foundation of all other blessings in this life. For the mind depends so much on the temperament and disposition of the bodily organs that if it is possible to find a way to render men wiser and cleverer than they have hitherto been, I believe that it is in medicine that it must be sought ... that we could be free of an infinitude of maladies, both of body and mind, and even possibly of the infirmities of age ...[11]

Should they so choose, scientists can prefer this prudent, cartesian peddling of their propaganda to frank acknowledgement of their nihilism. But philosophers had no choice; they were compelled to communicate exoterically. As philosophers, they wanted science, knowledge of reality, but their grasp of science was vitiated by political faith in their own non-arbitrary nature or birth. They shared this faith with non-philosophic herd members. They were deeply rooted in the political orientation whose authority they questioned. Communication of this

questioning -- indeed the questioning itself -- needed to retain awareness of its dependence upon that orientation. Exotericism is the expression of this dependence of the philosopher on the political roots which gave his questioning its goal. Philosophers did not interpret their exotericism mainly as propaganda designed to make science's nihilism palatable to either the soft, permissive bigotry of liberal democracies or the harsh, repressive bigotry of communism or nazism.

The philosopher sought knowledge of the true good or god, the main political authority, but as a philosopher, a mere seeker after this "science," he acknowledged his lack of an adequate grasp of it. Consequently his main concern was whether his questioning was better than the pious obedience of non-philosophic herd members. Both alternatives arose from herd instinct delusion: political philosophy or political obedience.

Exotericism indicates awareness that philosophy lacks the knowledge to reject its political roots as prejudice or superstition. Philosophic exotericism is communication which pays homage to its political authorities while seriously questioning their validity. For in the absence of "science," knowledge of <u>what</u> the good is, philosophy is given direction by its political rootedness, the conviction <u>that</u> the good really exists as something more than empty phantasmagoria. This political delusion is philosophy's hallmark. Far from being guileful dissembling before the unphilosophic many, exotericism was philosophy's acknowledgement that it shared their political orientation. Indeed it owed its direction and goal to that orientation.

Philosophers indicated their ambiguous relation to politics indirectly, between the lines as it were. Their writings were intended to discourage both philosophy's political persecution and unphilosophic (scientific) contempt for politics. In this century, Strauss' <u>Persecution and the Art of Writing</u> is the best introduction to the exotericism dictated by philosophy's combination of ignorance and knowledge. Socratic or ancient thought was exoteric because its political orientation obfuscated science. This permitted it to seriously entertain the possibility of its political value and, therefore, to harbor doubts about the political wisdom of persecuting free inquiry. Those doubts are dispelled by an enlightenment which would have repelled Socratic, pre-scientific thought. Politics is totally eroded by science and is, however unintentionally, seriously threatened by philosophy's need to replace mere opinions about politics by science, genuine knowledge of good and evil. For it was only the philosopher's political delusion about his goal, "science," which led to his being philosophic in the first place. He did

not realize that science means annihilation of politics and the philosophic exotericism dependent upon it. Husserl caught something of this hostility:

> The conservatives content with tradition and the philosophical circle will fight against each other and without doubt the battle will take place in the sphere of political power. Already in the beginnings of philosophy, persecution sets in ... And yet ideas are stronger than any forces rooted in experience.[12]

But Husserl was blind to the utter annihilation of politics by science, philosophy's unintended culmination. Not alive, as Benn was, to the impossibility of science's "incarnation," he dreamt that its practical application would

> elevate mankind through universal scientific reason in accord with norms of truth in every form and thus transform it into a radically new humanity made capable of an absolute responsibility to itself on the basis of absolute theoretical insights.[13]

Husserl failed to comprehend that his proposed transformation of philosophy into science would erode politics. Without being aware of it, his "science" still was political, that is, capable of fulfilling herd instinct demands for morality: "From its earliest beginnings, philosophy has claimed to be the science that ... renders possible from an ethico-religious point of view a life regulated by purely rational norms."[14] No Kierkegaardian or Nietzschean desperation here! They knew what science was; Husserl did not. He confused it with its window-dressing, that is, with politics. They knew that scientific enlightenment meant truth's replacement by loyalty or being true (*Treue*), by fanatic commitment grounded only in itself -- a will fanaticized by its awareness of the intellectual fraud of any effort to be something rather than nothing. In Kierkegaard or Benn, Husserl's naive, unconscious intellectual dishonesty becomes conscious of what it means to be political, to be true when to be anything is a lie: unconscious naivete becomes conscious extremism.

Husserl, like all pseudo-scientists, was not alive to that agony because he confused science and politics. What Benn called the West exists in a fragile, perhaps impossible, balance, an ever-endangered tension between freedom and slavery. Man's political cravings always are terrified by the West's scientific heart. Thus the more politically com-

mitted, a nation becomes, the less Western it is. Since the defeat of Germany (1945), Russia has been the strongest political force and therefore the greatest contributor to the decline of the West. Intellectuals usually prefer American permissiveness to Russia's more political suppression of science. However it is crucial to see that this preference does not, as Husserl believed it did, involve political battles. For politics would become Benn's catastrophic extremism, if science politically conquers the grovellers. Furthermore genuine scientists despise the need to fight their political persecutors, realizing that this persecution is as futile as anything else in reality's void -- including their contempt for it! In this sense Husserl was right: science wins, but not by fighting for political toleration or mankind's elevation. The West need not fight at all to establish its total victory. Political determination to eradicate science is as vain as Kierkegaard's leap or Kirillov's yearning that life be more than empty words. The West eternally prevails over naive efforts to discredit its nihilism. This victory may be pyrrhic politically, but scientifically it is authentic and absolute. I believe that divination, however muddled, of nihilism's decisive victory somehow inspires both Husserl's misplaced political confidence in science and America's unpolitical permissiveness for it. This permissiveness may mean political defeat. Russia's political supremacy may bring global military triumph. Even then real victory will belong to American realism not Russian hallucinations. To the extent that American intellectuals succeed in obfuscating science in favor of their propaganda, they degrade America's disdain for politics into their struggles for political victory. This means transformation of America into Russia or, to use the language of political ideology, of liberal democracy into communism. For single-minded commitment to politics has meant Russian communism since German nazism's defeat. The more political a man or people become, the more communist they will be, the more they will persecute science.

Strauss fought to resurrect faith in a world in which being political and being communist were not identical. He wanted to rehabilitate philosophy and its esotercism. Thus he entitled his last (posthumously edited and published) work Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy, however implausible that title appears to scholars lacking Nietzsche's awareness of Platonic philosophy's political rootedness. Strauss sought revival of Plato's experience of thought as politically motivated. He did not despise political concerns as "dog-like grovelling." In this connection, contrast the reference to dogs (and wolves) in Nietzsche's Zarathustra (II:8) and Plato's Republic (343B-C, 376A-C, 416A). Nietzsche prefers the wolves (scientists) who prey on the flock (politics) and

its watch dogs (philosophers); Plato's sympathies are with the watch dogs whom he calls philosophic beasts. Strauss did not consider politics a low calling, necessary only to the *hoi polloi* but despicable to the enlightened few who require political prudence to preserve themselves against persecution. His exotericism was not seen by him as a Machiavellian reminder to scientists to dissemble their nihilism before grovellers. He did not see, and would, therefore, have denied that his attempt to regenerate exotericism was nothing but an unconscious version of Kierkegaard's conscious extremism.

Nietzsche's criticism of conservatism also applies to Strauss' enterprise: scientific enlightenment precludes philosophy's resuscitation. If Strauss nevertheless seriously intended that resuscitation, where in the West did he acquire the necessary illusion of political rootedness? Where did he find his East in the West? I suspect that it arose more from his being Jewish than German or American. For orthodox Judaism, even in its Christianized-Spinozist forms still retains more traces of its pre-Christian, pre-scientific roots than the Germany into which he was born or the America to which he emigrated. His uncovering of those illiberal roots sparked his struggle to recover philosophic esotericism.

From that struggle's point of view, Strauss' interpretation of Jewish election makes sense: " ... it looks as if the Jewish people were the chosen people, at least in the sense that the Jewish problem is the most manifest symbol of the human problem insofar as it is a social or political problem."[15] In this Strauss opposed Spinoza (and his usually unwitting students such as Cohen, Rosenzweig, and Buber) who appealed, against official legalistic Judaism to

> the absolutely free or sovereign God of the Bible ... Moved by this spirit he embraced Paul's doctrine of predestination ... Spinoza's God is simply beyond good and evil. God's might is His right and therefore the power of every being is as such its right; Spinoza lifts Machiavellianism to theological heights. Good and evil differ only from a merely human point of view; theologically the distinction is meaningless ... In the state of nature, that is, independently of human convention, there is nothing just or unjust, no duty and no guilt ...[16]

Opposing this Christian (Pauline)-scientific Judaism and its apotheosis of nihilism, Strauss opted for the official Judaism inspired by platonic or political philosophy:

> Official Judaism was legalistic and hence rationalistic. Its rationalism ... had found its perfect expression in the Platonic conception of God as an artificer who makes the universe by looking to the unchanging, lifeless ideas. In accordance with this, official Judaism asserted that God has created the world and governs it *sub ratione boni* ... Spinoza revolted against this official assertion.

Against Spinoza's Christian-nihilist Judaism, "Jewish orthodoxy based its claim to superiority to other religions from the beginning on its superior rationality (Deuteronomy, 4:6)." Spinozist enlightenment, "the victory of orthodoxy through the self destruction of rational philosophy ... was a victory not of Jewish orthodoxy but of any orthodoxy" -- that is, any bigotry proved itself true or divine by overpowering competing bigotries! Apart from this demonstration of its might and therefore its right, there is no non-arbitrary standard by which to measure any orthodoxy's validity: there are no facts, only interpretations!

Spinozist Judaism's nihilist orthodoxy crippled platonic Judaism's orthodoxy by forcing it to experience itself as mere faith or belief, not self-evident knowledge or science. Its trust in an absolute, non-arbitrary good was unmasked as simply another opinion or point of view:

> ... it became clear ... that the presuppositions of Jewish, platonic] orthodoxy ... were not philosophically known, but only believed and therefore did not have the actual binding force of what is known ... The development of the new science led to the perception that the fundamental teachings of the orthodox tradition ... were merely believed.[17]

Jewish orthodoxy was no more than one of many prejudices or superstitions.

Determined to reverse or dismantle this Spinozist victory, Strauss struggled to revitalize the old, official Jewish legalism and its platonic roots. In those roots, platonic political philosophy, Strauss found the heart of Judaism's divine election. It made Judaism more than just another stimulating or exciting religious viewpoint. It denied the fashionable liberal tolerance of religious pluralism by subordinating all other orthodoxies to its absolute authority (*sub ratione boni*). Those orthodoxies were seen at best as mere images or shadows of Judaism's true, rational good.

For Strauss, the Jewish problem was the human problem: any effort to be more than mere words or beliefs (Kirillov), to reject the nihilism of Spinozist-Christian Judaism, is, at bottom, homesickness for Strauss' Pharisaic Judaism and its pre-scientific political rootedness. The alternative posed by these conflicting Jewish orthodoxies confronts all thoughtful men: honesty or swindle? nihilist science or political philosophy?

Opposition to Strauss' Jewish platonism has united Jew-haters from medieval crusaders to their Spinozist-Westernized heirs, especially in nazi and communist regimes, but also in liberal democracies. Those heirs condemn orthodox Judaism's narrow Pharisaic legalism, its voluntary segregation from gentile contamination, its contempt for religious pluralism. At the close of Strauss' Liberalism Ancient and Modern, he contended that such voluntary segregation would become mandatory for all moral men "faced with the grim prospect" of nihilism's global victory. That universal triumph is guaranteed by scientific erosion of politics. Only blissful ignorance of philosophy's actual, nihilist goal permitted Strauss to strive, with a clear conscience, for its resurrection. His platonism is, however unintentionally, propaganda for science. Probably it is science's most seductive advertisement, creating the agreeable illusion that intellectual freedom promotes self-improvement or self-preservation rather than self-destruction.

In the muddled naive way of serious efforts to be political, Russia is more alive than America to the political danger of free inquiry. Like Germany (1933-1945), Russia is totalitarian in its determination to totally politicize human life. To this end, science, the main threat to politics, must be eradicated. To be sure, Russia like most grovellers, tends to identify science with its propaganda. The orthodox line is that Russian communism is scientifically grounded. However, Russia is far more intolerant of free inquiry than America. She simply brands genuine science as unscientific and thus feels free to suppress it. To tolerate its nihilism would mean acknowledging the inanity of totalitarian craving to totally politicize mankind.

That totalitarianism seemed unnecessary or insane to the pre-scientific politics sparking Strauss' esotericism. Its faith in absolute, non-arbitrary political goods existing by nature is not available to the "scientific" propaganda disseminated by Russia. Instead the Russians, following Marx, and ultimately Spinoza's machiavellian theology, put their faith in historical- evolutionary processes which they claim, will issue in an inevitable Russian triumph over America. For genuine science, this faith is as groundless as any attempt to establish causation. I

suspect that awareness, however confused, of this groundlessness sparks the fanaticism of Russian suppression of science. Like nazi Germany, Russia must persecute science or philosophic desire for science. Totalitarianism intends to erase all feelings or thoughts rendering politics either questionable (philosophy) or meaningless (science). In particular, it needs to eliminate the nerve of politics, man's desire for the good life, the best or ideal state. This desire is responsible for philosophy's yearning to become scientific, to know the absolute good or god. Because pre-scientific, pharisaic politics was not alert to this threat to itself, it felt no need to be totalitarian. Consequently it unwittingly provided the grounds for science's philosophic propaganda. Totalitarianism means to purge politics of this propaganda. Paradoxically this intention is as self-destructive as Benn's catastrophic extremism. Thus science annihilates even totalitarian efforts to suppress it!

Totalitarianism is politics committed to eradication of philosophy's pre-scientific roots. In this crucial sense, it unwittingly is committed to its own destruction. For those roots, or homesickness for them, is the very force which makes men yearn to be political in the first place. Consequently totalitarianism and Strauss' attempted revitalization of political philosophy both inadvertently promote nihilist self-annihilation. Strauss' victory would create a philosophy bent upon becoming scientific, while totalitarian victory would destroy the homesickness responsible for all desire to be political. Whether totalitarian or Straussian, that homesickness is grounded in pre-scientific delusion. Both spring from fear of science's nihilism. Consciously or unconsciously this fear sparks their refusal to interpret all politics as extremist leaps into impossibility. This refusal informs Strauss' discouragement of scientific interpretation of the Bible or of nature itself:

> To grasp the natural world as a world that is radically prescientific or prephilosophic ... it is not necessary to engage in extensive and necessarily hypothetical anthropological studies. The information that classical philosophy supplies about its origins suffices, especially if that information is supplemented by consideration of the most elementary premises of the Bible[18]

For Strauss those elementary premises signalled the need to recover platonic or political philosophy. If Strauss wanted restoration of platonic philosophy, he rejected Aristotle's unambiguous subordination of politics to philosophy.[19] For the question of this subordination's va-

lidity is the question for political philosophy: Is pious subordination better than philosophic questioning? On the philosopher's political horizon, this question always is more evident than either answer to it. However the philosopher always felt certain that the true, final answer existed and was, in principle, knowable. Strauss' homesickness for Jewish political rootedness produced this certainty. Without it, philosophy would cease to feel philosophic and become, instead, some more conscious version of science's propaganda. For if not only philosophy's two alternatives (unquestioning or questioning obedience) but even its faith in a non-arbitrary good or god is groundless, then the very distinction between opinion and knowledge, between philosophy and science, is vain. This groundlessness is obvious to genuine science for which there are no facts, but only bigotries, or, if you will, interpretations -- of nothing by nothing.

Strauss' return to platonic Judaism arose from unwillingness to leave it at nihilism. His resurrection of esotericism sprang from fear of nihilism. This fear made the existence of an absolute good as evident to philosophers as its non-existence is to scientists. Consequently Strauss wrote as if serious reflection could restore it. He surely would have denied that this restoration arose from fear of nihilism. This blindness causes the main difference between him and most, if not all of his students. I suspect that they, whatever their differences, would admit that reality might be nihilist and therefore destructive of both politics and philosophy. In this crucial respect, they seem to me more scientific or Christian than their teacher.

I believe that Strauss, like platonic Judaism, never really conceded that possibility, although, to reach students infected by science, he sometimes gave the appearance of concession. The split between his students seems to be between those conceding it as a repellent possibility and those embracing it as true but imprudent to profess publicly. If Strauss himself allowed its possibility, he showed that the political rootedness informing philosophic esotericism no longer was his. Then his revival of esotericism is exposed as being what all craving for communication and community always was -- desperate promotion of one orthodoxy over another. This extremism, the nearest thing to honesty in politics, seems foolish or insane only to those bewitched by herd instinct fear of nihilism.

Heidegger discerned that fear behind the perversion of nazism's "inner truth and greatness" by those, like Hitler, who "fished in the murky waters of values and universals."[20] Furthermore Heidegger knew that all politics, nazi or otherwise, was a farce. Strauss noted that Hei-

degger severed the connection between serious thought and politics "more radically than either Marx or Nietzsche. One is tempted to say that Heidegger learned the lesson of 1933 better than any other man. Surely he leaves no place whatsoever for political philosophy."[21] This also is evident in his denial of any substantial difference between contemporary ideologies: " ... In Heidegger's view politics is subjective self-assertion ... Hence for Heidegger the moral distinctions between regimes are erased; Americanism, Communism and Nazism are all forms of subjectivity, all forms of self-assertion, and thus -- superficial differences notwithstanding -- all essentially alike."[22]

Science annihilates politics, any effort at community or communication. It does not merely devalue politics' more popular manifestations such as democracy or communism. It means realization that the desire to be or to do anything is dishonest. Insofar as this desire becomes alive to its own bigotry, philosophy, the quest for truth, is replaced by desperate resolve to be true (Treue) or loyal. In a world in which nothing -- and only nothing! -- is true, being true to oneself and one's own means fanatic self-assertion, "the bitter and hard resoluteness of a will asserting itself in the face of its own nothingness" in conscious opposition to what it knows to be true. It is permeated by the knowledge that nothing in heaven or on earth sustains its fanatic loyalty except its own extremism. This awareness makes conscious and therefore fanatic grovelling ring truer than the shallow, naive grovelling which Strauss strove to resurrect. Whether extremist or naive, grovelling remains grovelling, politics' futile yearning to make something out of nothing: "Mind (*Geist*) or life -- they are irreconcilable, something which Nietzsche did not see. The one does not actualize itself in the other -- that is political gibberish. `Life' has absolutely no reality; it is merely the repetition of absurdities."[23]

Chapter 6

Neumann or Nihilism: The Case for Politics by Harry V. Jaffa

A Comment on

"Leo Strauss or Nihilism: The Case Against Politics"

by Harry Neumann

Nothing prevents anything from changing or being changed into anything else ...
-- Harry Neumann

Harry Neumann is a Straussian, masked as a nihilist, unmasking nihilists masked as Straussians, or is he?
-- Harry Jaffa

In reading Professor Neumann's present paper, as in reading many other of his writings -- especially the one he contributed to Natural Right and Political Right -- I am reminded of a story I read many years ago. It is a retelling of the "The Reichenbach Falls," the "final" confrontation between Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Moriarty. In this version Sherlock Holmes, disguised as Dr. Moriarty, unmasks Dr. Moriarty, disguised as Sherlock Holmes. Or does he? Each proceeds once again to unmask the other. In the end it becomes clear -- or does it? -- that there is no ultimate identity for either. The only reality is -- or are -- the masks themselves, as they change continuously into their opposites.

I am also however reminded of the discussion between Socrates and Polemarchus, culminating in the definition of justice, as the art of the thief. Justice had been defined as the art of safekeeping, and who knew better how to keep something safe than the one who best knew how to steal it? Holmes and Moriarty both had the art of the thief. What

then can be the difference between them? Is Holmes the one who exercises his art justly, and Moriarty the one who does so unjustly? But is justice itself just? There is nothing in the conception of the art itself, to distinguish the just exercise of the art of justice from the unjust exercise of the art of justice. Indeed, the very question is absurd. Can there then be two opposite identities, or is there only one? Are not all identities illusions? Is not the non-reality of identity the identity of nothingness?

Perhaps what motivates Holmes and Moriarty is the desire for victory -- over each other. Perhaps the identity of the one, as being on the side of the law, and the other, as its would-be destroyer, is purely accidental. Perhaps it is a matter of indifference to either Holmes or Moriarty which side he is on: choosing sides is merely incidental to matching wits with the other. Had Moriarty been law-abiding, or Holmes a criminal -- so that they would both have been on the same "side" -- the contest between them would not have been possible. (Thinking of Holmes and Moriarty as two Mafia bosses, contesting the same territory, would not work. The "honesty" of their rivalry would be poisoned, as was that of Coriolanus and Aufidius. Aufidius' killing Coriolanus at the end is no victory.) Victories over petty criminals -- or Scotland yard -- are nothing but training exercises preparatory to encountering each other. Each needs the other to test his mettle to the point that he can gain the final satisfaction -- or happiness -- that comes from having been proved to be the best.

As we have noted, Holmes and Moriarty are related very much as Coriolanus and Aufidius, according to Shakespeare. Each is a representative of heroic virtue, and each is ambitious to be recognized as the supreme representative of such virtue, which is possible only by combat with the other. Each is a necessary means to the other's highest end -- and in that sense is at once his dearest friend and bitterest enemy. The contest between Coriolanus and Aufidius transcends the contest between Romans and Volscians. Or does it? The conflict between them turns personal only when they are on the same side, and ends in tragedy -- tragedy that would not have happened if their enmity had been based -- at least nominally-upon the rivalry of their countries. Political virtue, it would seem, cannot transcend the ends that it serves. Whether ends higher than the political can be genuine ends, remains a question. Shakespeare seemed to think that there are such higher ends, as did Leo Strauss. Strangely enough -- as I hope to show -- this is Professor Neumann's conclusion also. Let me pause here to notice also, that Thrasymachus, following Polemarchus, accuses Socrates of arguing, not for truth, but for victory. Indeed, Thrasymachus becomes a disciple of

Socrates, in the course of the Republic, when he concludes that Socrates is stronger than he. Since Thrasymachus defines justice as the interest of the stronger, Thrasymachus shows his own justice by submitting to Socrates when Socrates proves stronger. The contest between them also resembles that between Coriolanus and Aufidius: the latter knows that the former is the stronger of them, and the two attempt to form a regime together. But this fails, and Socrates and Coriolanus both go to their deaths for similar reasons. (The "real" Thrasymachus -- in deed and not in speech -- is the City of Athens.) Socrates and Coriolanus both become citiless, even though in the end they obey the cities whose authority they have rejected and that have rejected them. What is clear from Socrates' encounter with Thrasymachus, as in many other Socratic *elengthoi*, is that it is impossible to distinguish victory from truth as Socrates' motive. The belief that Socrates argued for victory -- and not truth -- is a function of Thrasymachus' belief that tyrannical power is the highest human good. Believing that, he naturally believed that Socrates' motive was victory -- and tyranny. Nothing Socrates says can persuade Thrasymachus that tyranny is not the highest good. Socrates' victory over Thrasymachus is possible only because Thrasymachus remains convinced that justice is the interest of the stronger. Socrates' victory is possible only because of his failure to persuade Thrasymachus that justice -- another's good -- is actually good for the one who is just. Did then Socrates' succeed or fail? Should we admire -- and imitate, if we can -- Socrates' ability to rule Thrasymachus, or reproach his inability to persuade Thrasymachus? Whether we do the one or the other determines what we think is Socrates' identity, and thereby what is our own.

Once Socrates had bested him, Thrasymachus must have been convinced that the pretense of disinterestedness, by which Socrates had won the contest, was the greatest instrument by which tyrannical power might be achieved. Thrasymachus' opinion of Socrates reminds one of the story in Herodotus, of the man who cultivated the reputation for justice until his fellow countrymen entrusted him with more and more power, until in the end he converted his rule into a perfect tyranny. This, of course, had been his motive from the outset. Incidentally this view of Socrates is not unrelated to the view of Christianity as the religion of humility -- and humility as the key to tyranny. Certainly that was implied in Machiavelli's dictum that all unarmed prophets have failed -- knowing that Jesus, and Machiavelli himself -- were unarmed prophets.

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Holmes, as Leo Strauss pointed out many years ago, is a Hobbesian Socrates. He lives in a regime dominated by fear of violent death, one recognizing only comfortable self-preservation as a rational goal of human life. But Holmes is bored by it all. He cannot live without danger. Holmes is, so to speak, the soul of Coriolanus in a bourgeois regime, in which courage is not a virtue of the ordinary citizen, and honor or glory are mere literary echoes of antiquity. Holmes's Victorian England is one in which, or so it seems, there is to be no war between civilized European regimes, and the superiority of the civilized over the barbarians is guaranteed by the morals of the former -- or if not by their morals then by their maxims (as Churchill puts it in Savrola). Holmes then needs the stimulus provided by crime to live. But the challenge of crime arises not from the petty criminals motivated by greed -- the same greed that motivates the prosperous bourgeois in whose service Holmes's art is placed. Rather is it the crime that arises from the master criminal -- Dr. Moriarty -- who seeks the same satisfaction in outwitting the Scotland Yard that Holmes does. Indeed, the resemblance of the satisfaction that Holmes and Moriarty find in outwitting Scotland Yard is an important clue to their inner relationship. Both ordinary criminals and Scotland Yard are inherently creatures of the bourgeois, Hobbesian regime. "Ordinary" criminals are not braver than their victims, they are merely lazier, or stupider. They accept the "values" of the avoidance of violent death, and of comfortable self-preservation, which are also those of respectable citizens. A great criminal, a tyrant -- or a philosopher -- is deterred neither by the fear of death, nor the desire for comfort.

Conan Doyle ends "The Reichenbach Falls" by a eulogy of Holmes which is almost identical with the eulogy of Socrates at the end of the Phaedo. The resemblance of Holmes and Socrates must have been much in his mind from the outset. As we have noted, both are practitioners of justice as the art of the thief. Socrates saves the laws of the city from the Moriarty of pre-Socratic science (of which he had once been an adept). Does he, however, actually discover the true ground of law in "the idea of the good," or of the ideas generally? Or is the idea of such truth only a noble lie to conceal the truth of nothingness from the citizens -- the way Holmes protects them from the depredations of the criminal mind? Because of his service to the law, Socrates was executed. But his execution was not, in his mind, an injury since, in the course of discovering the alleged philosophic ground of the law, he had

discovered as well the immortality of the soul. In the Phaedo we observe Socrates surrounded by his friends, gathered in the prison to mourn his demise. Yet he comforts them, by teaching them that the soul does not perish with the body. In the course of philosophical speculation, the mind, reflecting upon its own activity -- what Aristotle would later call the *nous noetikos*, thought thinking itself -- would discover a ground of its existence outside the shifting, impermanent experience of external reality. The discovery of the possibility of knowledge in an unchanging ground of changing experience is the discovery of the immortality of the soul. In this discovery is the antidote to that fear which arises in the soul from identifying its existence with the transient existence of the body. Fear of death, and of the loss of existence, are to be encountered by the depreciation of the life centered upon such existence and its pleasures. But this depreciation can be achieved only by the demonstration of a different and more durable existence -- with superior and more durable pleasures than any that is bodily and transient.

Socrates emancipated his disciples from the fear of death by teaching the immortality of the soul. The Hobbesian regime freed men to enjoy comfortable self-preservation by threatening with violent death anyone who disobeyed the laws protecting persons or property. A Hobbesian regime is one in which physical self-preservation is protected supremely well by the law. But the law abiding guardians of a Hobbesian regime (viz., the sovereign) are not well qualified to threaten anyone with violent death. (Note how easily latter-day Hobbesians become opponents of the death penalty, without which their regime is utterly without authority). They cannot protect against those who reject the principles of the regime, and prefer danger and death to a humdrum existence. They need guardians of their own. Hence the need for Sherlock Holmes. Only thus can the energies of a Hobbesian regime be liberated for the pursuit of comfortable self-preservation -- which means above all the pursuit of science for the relief of man's estate. And the relief of man's estate means extending the life span -- to eternity if possible -- while multiplying the means of non-life threatening pleasures. Let us recall that "science" means -- as Harry Neumann says -- that anything can be changed into anything else. But the "great change" is death itself. If anything can be changed into anything else, then death can be changed into life. This understanding of science is at the heart of the Hobbesian regime. Resurrection -- and eternal life -- are no longer illusory realities to be dealt with by faith, but substantial realities dealt with by science. But science -- as Neumann also tells us -- displaces faith by abolishing the distinction between illusion and reality. Science

lusion. Leo Strauss, in his critique of the higher criticism, which focuses upon the alleged contradictions in the Bible, asks by what right does the higher critic assume that speech about God -- the First Thing -- is possible without self-contradiction? Can one then be certain that Socrates' attack upon self-contradiction -- by which he accuses his accusers -- does not serve ultimately to conceal a deeper self-contradiction? The one by which he supposes non-self-contradiction about the "first things" to be possible? Is not this the myth which Plato plants in our unwitting souls, while pretending to exhibit to us the noble lies which Socrates says will be induced into the souls of the future citizens of the best regime? But if Socrates' art of detection is based upon an illusion, then it is in the service, not of knowledge, but of power, not of philosophy, but of tyranny -- as Thrasymachus said. The philosopher will in truth be the masked tyrant.

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In rethinking the recounting of the illusion of the confrontation between Holmes and Moriarty, I have often wondered, Who told the story? And, to whom is the story told? How can stories be possible if they originate with masks and are told only to masks? The nihilist account of reality asks us to believe that no account of reality is possible! Are we not confronted here with that old Cretan (the first modern philosopher) who declared that all Cretans are liars? That is the difficulty into which Professor Neumann's apparent nihilism plunges us. How can nihilism be the only stable truth in an illusory world? This difficulty is however not more mystifying than the problem presented to us by the very first words of the Bible. Who tells us of the creation of the world? Who speaks of God in the third person? If it is true, as some say, that God created *ex nihilo* then God Himself belonged to the Nothing that was prior to Creation. That is to say, the highest reality is predicated of that Being -- God -- whose nothingness (uncreatedness) is of the essence of his perfection. Leo Strauss, it will be recalled, said that "I am that I am ... " is better translated "I shall be that I shall be ... ." This implied that God, as potentiality rather than actuality, is non-being rather than being, at least as non-being and being are understood by merely human intelligence. Moreover, to say that "nothing prevents anything from changing or being changed into anything else ... " is to say nothing different than saying that nothing (viz., Nothing) limits the power of God.

Professor Neumann's argument for the universal insignificance of everything also parallels the argument of the Bible, which treats everything beside God -- viz., the Supreme Something because Supreme Nothing -- as intrinsically insignificant, apart from its infusion with significance by God. When Neumann speaks of the "illusion of an alternative to nihilism" he also echoes the Bible's rejection of philosophy, not as the handmaiden of revelation, but as self-sufficient, autonomous human reason. His thematic text is not the Bible, however, but Nietzsche, "Morality is the herd instinct in the individual." At first glance, this would seem merely to parallel -- as a kind of pejorative version -- Aristotle's calling man the social or political animal. But if morality was merely the herd instinct, why do men differ -- as herds do not -- as to what is moral? Bees and ants do not quarrel over what regime the bee hive or ant hill should have. Where instinct provides the answer, there is no difference as to what the answer should be. But perhaps Nietzsche and Neumann imply that it is as much a matter of objective indifference what form the regime takes -- what morality any tribe or human herd adopts -- as it is a matter of subjective indifference to the bee that he is not an ant, and to the ant that he is not a bee. But the herd instinct refers to self-preservation. Those animals are herd animals who need the herd to survive. But survival refers to mere life, and herds -- properly so called -- do not concern themselves with anything except preservation. They have no ends except those intrinsic to self-preservation. Human "herds" differ, not as to the desirability of self-preservation, but as to that something beyond self-preservation which distinguishes mere life from the good life. Calling morality the herd instinct is then a sarcastic or sardonic reference to the Hobbesian regime -- the only regime in which the passion for self-preservation is <u>the</u> principle of the regime. In fact, the Hobbesian regime is not actually a regime at all, since fear of violent death so dominates the soul of the true "citizen" of that regime, that the question of what the regime should be -- the animating question of all political existence, properly so called -- is completely suppressed. But an authentic political community will always fight for its way of life. It will always identify self-preservation with the preservation of that way of life, and not merely with continued bodily existence. Death is always preferable to slavery. Morality means valuing one's "sacred honor" above everything else, including one's life and fortune. Hence morality cannot be understood as the herd instinct. Morality may be understood -- as Professor Neumann seems to understand it -- as essentially attachment to one's own, as distinct from the

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nunciation of ends as an end, is an illusion. Believing in the renunciation of ends in favor of the unlimited abundance of means one will fight far more ruthlessly when confronted with an enemy who does not accept this renunciation. The goal of the renunciation of war, for example, leads, as we now well know, only to ever greater wars. It leads as well to the intensification of the claims of those regimes -- those tyrannies -- that proclaim the end of war (and of politics) as intrinsic to their success. Marxist Communism is in truth the regime embodying the claims of modern Liberalism.

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No one has made clearer than Harry Neumann the sense in which both Communism and National Socialism are the prototypical regimes embodying the claims of modern science. That they suppress true science, as Liberal Democracy does not, is no objection to their claims. The claims of the totalitarians, after all, refer to the end, rather than the ways to the end. No one can accept the premises of modern science without admitting that science under true Communism will be freer than science under Liberal Democracy. After all, under true Communism there will be no enemies, against whom one must protect any scientific secrets. But will not science also be "freer" under true Naziism? Certainly the Nazis promised the scientists freedom from the moral restraints under which science in Liberal Democracy still labors. The culmination of science is to give man the power of God at the Creation -- the willed transformation of anything into anything -- of slavery into freedom -- of death into life -- and of life into death. And all one has really to do to achieve this, is to believe in one's own willed illusions.

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As some may know, a difference exists among the former students of Leo Strauss, as to whether there is, or is not, any foundation for American liberal democracy, besides the political philosophy of Thomas Hobbes. One prominent Straussian has declared in the pages of the Wall Street Journal that the political philosopher *par excellence* of the American Constitution is Thomas Hobbes. If this were true then the American regime would at best constitute one of two suicidal alternatives. But, as we have seen, these alternatives, while presenting themselves as radical opposites, in fact convert easily into each other. Like the regimes of Hitler and Stalin (or the beefsteak Nazis, brown on the

outside, red on the inside) they really have no separate identity. Straussianism has thus become the esoteric promulgation of the doctrine that American democracy is the non-alternative to tyranny, in a world in which no such alternative exists. It has become a fashionable elite pretending to believe in the viability of the American alternative, while communicating -- by knowing winks -- that this is an illusion. They believe it to be an illusion, not because of any argument establishing its illusory character, but because they have Hobbes' contempt equally for moral virtue and the doctrine of ideas -- that is, for the ground of classical philosophy. Yet the exoteric ground of their presentation is the assumption that they are classical in their philosophic presuppositions. Their esotericism is really the Protean face of modern science, in which everything changes, or threatens to change into everything else. Political philosophy means, for them, being prepared for everything, because they know that the foundation of everything is -- Nothing. But Harry Neumann, carrying the art of Sherlock Holmes to heights undreamed of by Conan Doyle -- or perhaps like an Odysseus wrestling Proteus -- will not allow their project to go undetected. There was nothing Protean about Leo Strauss, but there was much that was Odyssean. He did not believe that decent regimes in modernity were doomed to perish, or to survive only by pretending to remain decent, while secretly offering -- in the name of virtue -- to gratify the passion for forbidden fruit.

-- *Harry Jaffa*
Claremont, California
August 1986

Chapter 7

Strauss and Nihilism: Response to Professor Harry Neumann
By Shadia Drury

Neumann provides us with a vision of human history that is bleak but not implausible. He believes that the history of man can best be understood as a conflict between philosophy and politics (i.e. the city). This conflict yields two new antagonists: science and modern (totalitarian) politics. Our own time reflects the deadly conflict between these two antagonists. On one hand there is science, which Neumann defines as the truth about the nothingness and meaninglessness of reality. On the other hand there is modern (totalitarian) politics, which Neumann understands as a desperate and impossible attempt to escape from the truth about reality (science or nihilism) by imposing order on reality's chaos. But how did Western civilization come to find itself in the grip of such a deadly conflict? Neumann's account of the human drama (for which he is deeply indebted to Strauss) is as follows.

In the beginning man lived "happily" under the spell of the great illusions of religion and morality that were the products of politics (i.e. the herd instinct). Primitive or pre-scientific man believed unquestionably in the gods of the herd. He lived in an ordered universe governed by divine reason and characterized by causation and responsibility. He thought that the distinction between good and evil was real and meaningful. He was convinced that the most important business was the securing of a political or communal good that has a reality independent of human volition. The life of pre-scientific man was thoroughly political, he was a herd-animal, a *zoon politikon*.

According to Neumann, philosophy emerges in the political atmosphere of pre-scientific societies, rooted in their ancestral customs and traditions. Philosophy is a quest for the truth about reality which Neu-

mann defines as *science* or *nihilism*. But philosophy is not scientific or nihilistic because it is only quest for truth or science and not truth or science itself. Philosophy remains shy of truth or nihilism, it fails to grasp the nothingness of reality because it is in the grip of the political illusion that human experiences are more than empty impressions. Philosophy is rooted in the political delusions that it shares with its non-philosophic herd members. Like the latter, the philosophers believe that there is a good that is independent of human volition. Moreover, this good is political or communal and "not some encouragement to individual self-expression or self-discovery." The only thing that sets the philosophers apart from the other herd-members is that "they are not sure" if the traditional or ancestral good, the good constituted by traditional authority, is the true (or natural) good. For Neumann philosophical skepticism does not hide a deeper nihilism; on the contrary, embedded in the questioning of philosophy is a faith in the reality of the natural good.

For Neumann as for Strauss, philosophy is esoteric. But according to Neumann, esotericism is not a cloak for nihilism, rather, it is a function of philosophy's genuine ignorance about the good. After all, it would be foolish for philosophy to undermine belief in the sacredness of the ancestral, if it did not have knowledge of a true or natural good that could replace it. Esotericism was therefore intended to hide philosophical doubt about the goodness of the ancestral, not to hide nihilism. Philosophy was thoroughly rooted in the political; esotericism was simply its own recognition of this rootedness.

Although philosophy was deeply political, it nevertheless contained the seeds of nihilism because it was committed to intellectual probity. As soon as philosophy reaches its goal, it destroys itself or becomes transformed into science. The latter has the effect of undoing pre-scientific politics and its illusions. For Neumann, politics and science are antithetical and mutually destructive. Science is honesty, truth, and hence nihilism, whereas politics is swindle, untruth and illusion. Science discovers the nothingness and meaninglessness of reality; it discovers that God is dead and that all is permitted. There are no oughts or musts in the scientific universe: all choice is arbitrary. The distinction between good and evil, life and death, self-preservation and self-annihilation are meaningless. There are no facts, only interpretations.

The nihilistic truth of science is anathema to politics. Politics is rooted in the desire for self-preservation, and preferably long and comfortable self-preservation. Science destroys the illusions that made pre-scientific politics possible. Science makes it impossible to believe that

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nihilistic, free, unpolitical, and unpatriotic. It is characterized by an unpolitical permissiveness that indulges science and free enquiry. Neumann reckons that America's permissiveness may end in her "political defeat" -- that is, in the "global military triumph" of Russia. But even if this were to be the case, Neumann declares that "real victory will belong to American realism not Russian hallucinations." But what could Neumann possibly mean by real? He must mean that America, even if it were politically annihilated will still be victorious from the point of view of truth and reality. But why should anyone care to be victorious from the point of view of truth and reality? Why is truth and reality to be preferred to falsehood and illusion in a nihilistic universe?

Despite his protestations to the contrary, Neumann is an existentialist, who, in the face of nihilism, clings to intellectual probity as a supreme value. But in the face of reality's nothingness, Neumann acknowledges that all truth is interpretation. In a nihilistic universe, politics is the conflict of interpretations backed by military might. The interpretation that triumphs politically must be regarded as the truth. In the context of nihilism there can be no truths other than the interpretations that man chooses to impose on chaos, on reality's nothingness. So, contrary to Neumann's claims, science and nihilism do not destroy modern fanatical or totalitarian politics, but exalt it. Politics alone can make and unmake truth in the context of reality's nothingness. This sophisticated nihilism transcends the exaltation of the Nothing and the irrational commitment to intellectual probity that characterize Neumann's nihilism. In my view, this is the sort of nihilism that Strauss, following Nietzsche embraces. But Neumann's view of Strauss' relation to nihilism differs dramatically from my own. Neumann regards Strauss' life and work as the microcosm of his own account of the human drama. According to Neumann, Strauss set out to "rehabilitate philosophy and its esotericism" with all its political rootedness because he feared nihilism. On Neumann's view, Strauss rejects Nietzsche and sets out to undermine nihilism by a return to Plato, to political philosophy in its original sense. In the context of modern nihilism, Neumann understands Strauss' quest as an impossible Kierkegaardian leap of faith, a desperate attempt to escape nihilism. But he believes that Strauss was too blind to see his own endeavor for what it really was. On the contrary, Neumann finds Strauss laboring under the pre-scientific illusion that there is a true or natural good that is political or communal. This is the reason that Strauss did not despise political concerns: his philosophy is modeled after Plato's "watchdog" who preserves the herd, rather that Nietzsche's "wolf" who preys on the herd.

According to Neumann: only blissful ignorance of philosophy's actual, nihilistic goal permitted Strauss to strive with a clear conscience, for its resurrection. His Platonism is, however, unintentionally, propaganda for science. Probably, it is science's most seductive advertisement ... Indeed, Neumann believes that the split between Strauss' students is the result of the fact that many of them did not share Strauss' own blindness to his quest to resurrect classical political philosophy -- namely, fear of nihilism. Although I agree with Neumann that the split between Strauss' students has a lot to do with nihilism, I do not share Neumann's view of Strauss' blindness to the nihilism inherent in the philosophical quest.

I agree with Neumann that Strauss is not a nihilist in the strictly Straussian sense of the term -- that is, he does not share Neumann's declared indifference to all values and choices. Nor does he share Neumann's commitment to intellectual probity. He denounces this brand of nihilism, not only because it is politically dangerous, but because he regarded it to be intellectually bankrupt. He criticized Heidegger and other "existentialists" for their irrational commitment to intellectual probity in the face of nihilism. Instead, he praised Nietzsche, who like Strauss and his Plato, embraced myth and illusion. The latter is superior to the truth, both from the rational and the esthetic point of view. Man cannot live or thrive without the atmosphere that only great illusions can provide. From the point of view of life, truth is inferior to illusion, it leads only to chaos, death and destruction. Unlike Neumann, Strauss does not think that life and death, self-preservation and self- annihilation are equal. Neumann fails to recognize the extent of Strauss' hedonism. For Strauss, there is a good by nature accessible to reason. But contrary to what Neumann thinks, this is not a political or communal good. The good in question is pleasure in general and the highest pleasure, the philosophical *eros*, in particular. Unlike Hobbes, Strauss did not believe that political society could openly serve pleasure as its end, and still manage to maintain itself. This is the reason that he rejected Hobbe's "political hedonism." Instead, he joined Nietzsche in thinking that only the few can be privy to the highest pleasure. These are the philosophers who are the makers of the myths and illusions necessary for the survival of the herd. The philosophers alone have the fortitude to withstand nihilism or the truth. They alone can love myth and illusion while knowing that they are merely products of art. Unlike Neumann, Strauss' philosophers, like Nietzsche's supermen are free of the compulsion to grovel before the truth. In the face of the nothingness of reality, they are the makers of truth, the interpreters of the nonexis-

tent text. No activity could be higher or more pleasurable. This is not to say that the order the philosophers impose on reality's chaos is arbitrary. Even though nature and human nature set no limits on human conduct (they contain no moral standards), they nevertheless provide the rough outlines of what is necessary for collective preservation. The philosophers fashion the horizons of the herd which endow the good and evil with meaning, but the philosophers are themselves beyond good and evil. In comparison to Strauss, Neumann's nihilism is less radical because it is less coherent.

When all is said and done about the differences between Neumann and Strauss, it remains the case that Neumann is deeply indebted to Strauss. First, Neumann's distinction between Science and Politics can best be understood as a variation of Strauss' opposition between philosophy and the city. For Strauss, philosophy is free inquiry unfettered by convention. In order to philosophize it is necessary to throw off the yoke of social restraint, to be free of the charms with which society holds us captive. Strauss believes that this is the reason that Plato's Laws begins with a long discourse on wine: the vicarious enjoyment of wine through conversation about wine is intended to loosen the tongues of old Clinias and Megillus, remind them of their youthful transgressions and prepare them for the uninhibited, erotic, intoxicated, not to say shameless thoughts of the philosopher.[1] In contrast, the city insists on a Draconian discipline, it is ascetic, anerotic, or as Strauss likes to say, "waspish." But unlike Neumann, Strauss does not regard the conflict between philosophy and the city to be deadly. He believes that the philosophical *eros* cannot exist apart from the city, it is parasitic on the city. But by the same token, politics or waspishness is bound to make life hell unless it is moderated by the philosophical *eros*. Philosophy has two contradictory postures within the city: on one hand, it must promote the waspishness necessary for collective self-preservation, on the other hand it must moderate the waspishness of the city, lest it destroy all of *eros* (including philosophy) in the wake of its oppressive intolerance.

Second, Neumann's vision of human history follows closely on the heels of Strauss' account of that drama. Neumann's conception of the life of pre-scientific man closely resembles Strauss' description of human life prior to the emergence of philosophy and the "collapse of the walls of the world" which provide man with security and shield him from the inhuman universe and the terror of its infinite spaces.[2] In Strauss' version of this Epicurean tale, reasoning, philosophy and the desire for knowledge break through the walls of the world, they under-

(Nietzsche's will to power is the will to overpower nihilism). Consider my remarks on Bukharin.

Any nihilist will suffer from that desperation, but only the weak ones will succumb to its need to do the impossible and any doing is a doing of the impossible! Neither that desperation nor any action (creation) caused by it is serious for genuine scientists (nihilists). This refusal to take his desperation seriously sparks the nihilist's hell. In any case, strong nihilists are linked by that desperation to their weaker brethren (such as Nietzsche or Kierkegaard). Anyone who finds pleasure in nihilism is only playing at it. He really is with Plato, Aristotle, Jaffa and Strauss -- men who never have experienced reality's nothingness and with whom I therefore have no real argument.

But Nietzsche, Kierkegaard and Heidegger experienced that void. They knew what reason or science is, but the desperation of their passions compelled them to attempt the impossible. But, as Plato insists, what is eternal cannot be changed -- nor is it subject to any historicist causation. To be sure, the small fry, most, if not all, contemporary intellectuals (i.e. pseudo-liberals) clumsily imitate the titanic striving of a Nietzsche or a Kierkegaard. But they do not count. My opponents are those difficult ones -- not difficult to refute since nothing is anything, but difficult to see why they (not some dumb liberal academics) insisted on trying to change what they knew could not be changed.

Just a few random comments on your paper:

1. Primitive men need not be prescientific. They can be more scientific than a Newton or an Einstein.

2. Nothing "must be regarded as the truth." A view which "triumphs" is no more true or false than those it "conquers". Winning, to be sure, seems to give winners the feeling of being in the right (cf. the Benn quotation about victorious and broken natures).

3. You have my preferences pretty straight.

4. Why are "great illusions" superior to truth? -- because men cannot live or thrive without them? (See that Benn quote again).

5. Anyone who believes that nihilism leads to "the greatest pleasure" has not experienced it! He reminds me of Donald Duck who is able to emerge from five story buildings and walk on air until he looks down and then he crashes -- as Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Aschenbach, Kurtz and Leverkuhn crashed.

6. Any order imposed on anything is arbitrary.

7. Not only philosophers but everyone else is (and always was) "beyond good and evil."

8. That "superabundance of will to power" is no problem for me in the usual dumb academic liberal -- but it is a problem in a Nietzsche, a Kierkegaard or a Heidegger!

9. In general, you do not see why Strauss, were he a nihilist, would have no concern with exotericism. What do real liberals or nihilists, men for whom nothing -- and only nothing! -- matters have to lose by being honest and open about their nihilism! Strauss was aware of the incompatibility of philosophy and atheist or nihilist honesty.[1] Incidentally *Philosophie und Gesetz* is among the "characteristically Straussian" works, contrary to Bloom's view cited on page 7 of your Strauss book. Strauss' crucial "change of orientation" found "its first expression" in the Schmitt review (circa 1932-3) according to the end of Strauss' autobiography which prefaces the American translation of his Spinoza book. But then Bloom and the other enemies of Jaffa among Straussians pay little, if any, attention to Strauss' Schmitt critique.

10. Strauss did see in Nietzsche an unsuccessful attempt to restore platonic or political philosophy. He believed

> that the essential difficulties of Nietzsche's teaching [of the eternal return, will to power, and superman] are grounded in its polemical character and disappear immediately, if one distinguishes between polemical approach and the teaching itself.[2]

The approach is polemical, a tough basic training, a Straussian liberal education, liberating reason from the

> incredible effeminating or spoiling (*Verwöhnung, Verweichlichung*) of mankind ... through faith in creation and providence ... If one takes to heart the decisive importance which this dogma has for all post-ancient philosophy, then one sees why liberation from this dogma was achievable only by a "superman's" effort to establish the teaching of the eternal return ... in other words, the eternal return is discovered in the search for a myth productive of strength and courage.[2]

-- a myth enabling the best men to be political or philosophic by rescuing them from reality's nihilism.

Only after one musters the courage to accept that myth, that is, to seriously consider the eternal return as possibly true, can one ascend from the artificial cave created by liberal science to the natural cave, the faith in a non-arbitrary good (god) common to moral-political men and

philosophers.[3] What Strauss calls the artificial cave is the nihilist reality uncovered by liberal reason (science). It is responsible for the spinozist-christian Judaism against which Strauss' platonic Judaism fights.

Mankind's appalling enervation is triggered by liberal science's destruction of the political-philosophic piety informing illiberalism or anti-liberalism. This destruction ruins everything, exposing the emptiness of all desire (to be something rather than nothing). It causes spiritedness' attack on reason and the reality unmasked by reason, an attack fueled by the self pity of a non-existent self![4] It thereby reveals what Strauss calls "the deepest secret of spiritedness," its willingness to defend the most indefensible self-indulgence.[5]

When science proves that nihilism cannot be overcome, spiritedness rages against reason as Ahab raged against Moby Dick or Satan against God. Their fury, the fire of Nietzsche's will to power, is against reality itself in defense of the passions annihilated by reality. But neither Ahab nor Stavrogin apotheosized their hatred, spite and vindictiveness, an apotheosis encouraged by pseudo-liberal moralizing of a freedom which reduces everything to nothing. In the more honest terms of a popular song -- freedom is just a word for nothing else to lose!

Political liberalism's cowardice flees that honest confrontation with the emptiness of its wretched freedom. Instead this void is canonized as the highest morality or higher than morality. Thus even if a liberal democrat finds somebody's choice immoral, he defends the man's right to choose as higher than morality, as the highest morality. His cowardice prevents acknowledgement of the inanity of all choice -- freedom is just a word for nothing else to lose!

That cowardice (political liberalism) moralizes nihilism, lacking the honesty driving genuine liberals (Nietzsche, Stavrogin, Ahab) to their doom. Strauss' platonic Judaism defends illiberalism (politics-philosophy) against this cowardice which wants "a world of fun, a world devoid of seriousness". In this fool's paradise, politics and philosophy would be creations of political liberalism's empty individualism and its "freedom."

Your Strauss -- not Leo Strauss! -- praises his Nietzsche and Plato for embracing that individualism's myth and illusion. Neither Strauss nor Nietzsche were that shallow. Not they, but the dumb professors hostile to them, drug themselves with the vacuous "stimulation" and "excitement" created by pseudo-liberal sophistication. Strauss' platonic Judaism fought to rescue politics-philosophy from this nihilism. The realization that no rescue is possible drove Nietzsche out of his mind. Neither were stupid enough to find joy in nihilist "liberation."

Chapter 9

Review of Leo Strauss' The Argument and the Action of Plato's Laws[1]

This book is an apparently simple, but actually labyrinthian interpretation. The many years of careful reading required to solve its mysteries would be well spent philosophically. For it is a philosophic work. Aware of what it means to be philosophic, Mr. Strauss claims that the Laws is Plato's most political (1) and most pious (2) work. He interprets Book 10 as its most philosophic part, since it contains a direct confrontation with the gods sanctifying family and civic life. This confrontation cannot culminate in philosophy's victory for it lacks sufficient knowledge of the good required to supplant those gods as the ultimate moral authorities.[2] Although that sufficiency of knowledge is the philosopher's goal, he lives in the realm of incomplete knowledge or opinion, unlike the pious or morally committed who are unable to experience their deepest ties as mere opinions.[3] Nor can philosophy provide adequate grounds for so experiencing them. Thus a philosopher desiring to guide human life would first need to numb his awareness of his ignorance through intoxication.[4]

Informing the political man's piety (illiberalism) is fear of the terrifying chaos of possibilities which threatens people unguided by divine law. Philosophic reduction of divine law to something seriously questionable, to mere opinion, exposes men to that "initial and final terror."[5] Strauss compares the Stranger's education of the two pious Dorians to Cyrus' corruption of his Persians in The Education of Cyrus. In both cases, education encourages tyrannic cravings, passions forbidden by the divine law which commands subordination of one's pursuit of happiness to the sacred duties of fatherhood and citizenship.[6] The old Dorians are repelled by the Stranger's willingness to use tyrants to further his aims.[7] For tyranny is rule not sanctified by the ancestral piety of one's city, however "enlightened" such rule may appear. Thus only

tyrants need philosophic rhetoric to legitimate themselves; non-tyrannic rulers are legitimated by their ancestral piety's unquestioning faith.[8]

Since philosophy appears tyrannic on Dorian horizons, the Stranger cannot suggest its open hegemony as Socrates can in his conversation with the immature Glaucon. At best, philosophy might have some influence in a clandestine nocturnal council composed primarily of pious old Dorians. Pseudo-liberal scholarship usually deplores such concessions to Dorian piety as unphilosophic or "racist."

Strauss' last three books revolved around the conflict between Socrates and Athenian piety, that is, between liberalism and illiberalism. He interprets the Athenian Stranger as a Socrates who chose exile to execution. He preferred Crete to Athens for the same reason that he, unlike the more liberal Glaucon, preferred to return to the older, more pious Athens rather than remain in the Piraeus, the impious, cosmopolitan seaport into which foreign gods may be imported with impunity.[9] Since Crete is more pious, it also is less liberal, more anti-Socratic, than the Athens which tolerated Socrates for seventy years. It is stronger in the ancestral piety which philosophy must discredit, but which its inadequate grasp of the Good prevents it from adequately discrediting.

Philosophy is inseparable from the courage to acknowledge its possible inferiority to its most implacable foe, the illiberal piety sanctifying the "racist" passions intent upon its extermination. Non-philosophic courage, on the other hand, is a form of cowardice, the pious fear of transgressing the illiberalism dearest to one's heart. For that pious fear is the non-philosopher's fortress against nihilism's "initial and final terror." Because they despise this cowardice, philosophers prefer to confront their worst enemy, civic piety, where it is stronger (Dorians) rather than weaker (Athenians). To be sure, the two Dorians transgress their "law of Laws" by abetting a foreigner in his criticism of their divine law. But then no philosophic discussion, however diluted, would be possible with them, unless they become momentarily intoxicated by seductive appeals to their forbidden desires.

Strauss notes that the utopia desired by non-philosophers would eliminate all sources of conflict (crime, moral indignation, hatred, revenge, etc.), and therefore the crucial conflict, philosophy's battle with illiberalism. If that war is inevitable in human souls, non-philosophers must yearn for the divine omnipotence required to eradicate philosophy. According to Strauss, the Athenian Stranger sees wars between gods as reflections of illiberalism's struggle against philosophy in the soul. However, unlike his detractors, Strauss knew the difference between

Socratic and un-Socratic courage in this war of wars. That awareness is reflected in his only oath which begs Heaven to forbid that pious Sparta should have been guilty of gross impiety. This oath reminds one of Thucydides' lament for pious Nicias and his reluctance to blame Sparta for breaking sacred treaties.[10] Lacking the willingness of Socratic courage to side with its worst enemy, pseudo-liberal scholars generally despise such "pious" scruples. Strauss places the responsibility for this lack on the amazing (and, for philosophy, unfortunate) success of the Laws' effort to disestablish familial or civic gods in favor of "Socratic" or cosmic gods.[11] As loyal citizens of regimes shaped by that pseudo-liberal disestablishment, most modern scholars despise Strauss for the same reason that the pious Dorians would have despised the Stranger, had he been unwilling to make Socratic concessions to their illiberalism (piety). Apparently Strauss believed that Socratic courage demands concessions to the ancient Dorian piety, while concessions to "Socratic" prejudices are un-Socratic. No scholarly work does more to stiffen resistance to those pseudo-liberal prejudices than Strauss' interpretation of the Laws. None is more Socratic in its appreciation of Dorian tastes forbidden in souls which experience the Socratic way of life as an illiberal answer and not a question. Thus Strauss attempted to prevent the victory of liberal science over illiberal (Socratic) philosophy by justifying illiberalism in a liberal world.

Unlike the unphilosophic Glaucon, Socrates does not want to remain in the Piraeus which tolerates his questioning far more than the pious, illiberal old city to which he is eager to return. Like the more intelligent Marx (Groucho!), Socrates is unwilling to join a "community" hospitable to him, to his philosophic questioning of its pious patriotism. That questioning would forfeit its seriousness; it would degenerate into political liberalism, if it chose an audience friendly to it. Hence Socrates' hurry to abandon the security of the Piraeus for the illiberalism of the old city whose pious patriots finally killed him.

A philosopher always seeks students among those to whom nothing is more repellent than his questioning. I suspect that Athenian piety somehow divined the nihilism which, however unintentionally, results from philosophy's achievement of its liberal goal, its transformation into genuine knowledge or science. I also believe that this divination was responsible for orthodox Christianity's hatred of Galileo, Bruno or Darwin and for orthodox Judaism's hatred of Spinoza, Husserl, Einstein or Freud. To be sure, Socrates had far more piety in him than

those scientists (liberals). Nevertheless the culmination of his questioning is their nihilism.

As opposed to scientists, philosophers seek out students to whom their questioning is anathema. Pseudo-liberals, on the contrary, gravitate to students open to their unmanly obfuscation of their nihilism. They seek what they hypocritically call "open-minded" students prepared to "entertain" alternatives, especially those hostile to illiberalism and its orthodoxies. This "entertainment" is crucial to what they mistakenly call liberal education. They are not alive to their entertainment's godless horror, a horror suppressed by their pseudo-liberal "consciousness raising."

The meaning of this suppression was brought home to me in a class taught jointly with a pseudo-liberal professor of the sort usually dominating college faculties. He was annoyed and gradually angered by a student whose religion prevented entertainment of "alternative lifestyles." Urged by the pseudo-liberal to entertain those alternatives hypothetically, the student firmly resisted, insisting that such entertainment was immoral and, as such, imperiled the salvation of his immortal soul. The scientist (nihilist) really meant, although he never explicitly said so, that all "knowledge" is hypothetical or tentative; there are no permanent, nonarbitrary standards for moral-political life. Consequently, students should be open to alternatives to the morality dearest to them. His was a war against illiberalism in all its orthodox forms.

The pseudo-liberal professor's pedagogy was designed to produce the democratic brand of pseudo-liberals. Like Professor Bloom,[12] he was mainly antagonized by the student's dogmatism, his clinging to illiberal orthodoxy. Like Bloom, he regarded dogmatism, unwillingness to consider alternatives, as the cardinal sin. They both share liberalism's hatred of politics whose hallmark is dogmatism, illiberal faith in what is held to be self-evidently right and good. Both aim to purge schools of "McCarthy and those like him ... the clearly nonacademic and antiacademic, the barbarians at the gates" (below, Chapter 10).

Like philosophers, political men such as McCarthy see life's primary concern with what is right and good. For its sake they are prepared to fight, and, if necessary, to die. Consequently, they abominate Bloom's view that serious education is "an eternal childhood for some, a childhood whose playfulness can in turn be a blessing to society." Bloom's enchantment by pseudo-liberal propaganda is responsible for his incredible interpretation of his nihilism as "a blessing to society."

Bloom's education is liberal and therefore a form of play, entertainment; its serious element is hatred of seriousness, that is, of poli-

tics. The seriousness of politics (illiberalism) is inseparable from religion and its dogmatism. For if men truly are convinced of their morality's goodness, they cannot see it as mere opinion, hypothesis or bigotry, alternatives to which must in good conscience be considered. Politics' seriousness points to a god, a nonarbitrary, permanent moral standard, justifying it -- or it points to the fanaticism of a Bukharin or a Hess, a pseudo-liberalism honest about its emptiness but still determined to be political.

Liberalism's aversion to dogmatism (politics) in education is responsible for Glaucon's preference for the Piraeus, for the scientist's hatred of the pious (political) student and for Bloom's disgust with contemporary relativism. To repeat: it is not relativism's immorality which appalls him, but its dogmatism. He does not deny relativism's possible truth; he opposes any student piously determined not to entertain this possibility. Indeed the heart of Bloom's pedagogy is elimination of piety (politics) by always compelling students to "entertain" alternatives. This compulsion is the real meaning of his pseudo-liberal subordination of politics to his university and its philosopher-kings. It is the very "political" program of his "truth party." Its self-understanding as a fight against McCarthyism and other moral-political prejudices, as an effort to be impartial, conceals its political bias. This concealment is the heart of political liberalism in all its forms.

> Liberalism negated the political; by so doing, liberalism did not banish the political from the world, but only concealed it. Liberalism brought about that politics is carried on by anti-political speech. Liberalism has not killed the political, but merely killed understanding of the political.[13]

Political liberalism's heart is in Bloom's "truth party" and its anti-political political crusade (masked by claims to impartiality) against politics. Like Sainte-Beuve, political liberals deplore Flaubert's preference for Carthage's illiberalism, but philosophers sympathize with his revulsion at liberalism's Moloch.

In Sainte-Beuve's spirit, Professor Rosen criticizes Strauss' propensity for illiberal arguments defending natural right and rural gentlemen (pious Dorians):

> We are offered prescientific arguments, or exhortations, for long-since rejected, not to say intrinsically absurd, doctrines

like natural right and the philosophical significance of the rural gentleman.[14]

But then Rosen believes that "according to Leo Strauss, classical philosophy, no less than modern, is an act of the will" ... "Both philosophy and religion rest upon an act of the will" for Strauss, an atheist who wills to be a god. For Rosen, Straussian exotericism conceals "his Nietzschean conception of philosophy as an act of the will."

Professor Rosen makes the same mistake about Strauss that I once made about Socrates (above, Introduction), interpreting Strauss' ignorance (of the good) as so total that it justifies anything or nothing. This ignorance makes any decision to do anything (including philosophy) a matter of arbitrary nihilist will: "We must observe that if philosophy is rooted in an act of will, then it cannot demonstrate its own worth. This holds good for Plato as well as for Machiavelli" (Rosen, p. 111). Rosen ends his book's central chapter: "I conclude this segment of my study with the assertion that Plato was a `modern', not an `ancient'" (p. 140). So, for Rosen, was Strauss and any intelligent man.

I agree with Rosen about intelligent men, but not about his modernizing (liberalizing) of Strauss and Plato. My criticism of my earlier equation of Nietzsche and Socrates holds for Rosen's claim that Strauss' conception of philosophy was Nietzschean. Like Bloom, Rosen is unpolitical (liberal) in his politics. Essentially a liberal scientist, he fails to grasp how illiberal Strauss and Plato were -- and, indeed, what it means to be philosophic or political, although I suspect he realizes how nihilist he is. It is this pseudo-liberalism that links Sainte-Beuve's aversion to Flaubert's Carthage with Rosen's condemnation of Strauss' classic taste:

> It is on my view not only possible but probable that were we to enact a `city' rooted in Strauss's version of the `noble reserve' and the `calm grandeur' of the classical thinkers, the results would be restrictive and demeaning to the human spirit, and hence base rather than noble.[15]

I too would reject Strauss's faith in the "noble reserve" and "calm grandeur" of the classical thinkers. However, like Flaubert and Rousseau, I maintain that men were nobler and happier as pious Dorians or citizens of Salammbo's Carthage than as political liberals. For they avoided the hell created by the liberal Moloch's war of political (philosophic) passion against liberal (nihilist) reason. Of course, this

war may be obfuscated by either the permissive propaganda of liberal democracies or the harsh, repressive propaganda of communism or nazism.

That obfuscation informs the pseudo-liberalism responsible for Professor Rosen's Nietzschean interpretation of Strauss (and Plato) and Professor Bloom's faith that his childishness, his disgust with dogmatism (politics), "can be a blessing to society." Bloom's Rousseauean liberalism is more permissive; Rosen's more tyrannic in its Nietzschean insistence that "all great philosophers engage in the divine prerogative of willing a world into being and hence of creating a way of life, not of submitting thought to that way." Rosen does not emphasize, as Nietzsche did, the nihilist horror of that "divine prerogative." This horror springs from realization that there is no reason to be anything in reality's nothingness.

In that void, Dostoevsky's Underground Man is more honest than Rosen's philosopher-gods or Bloom's philosopher-kings. For he is not deluded by liberal (nihilist) dreams about the blessings of divine creativity or intellectual playfulness. Bloom's and Rosen's pseudo-liberalisms converge in the Nietzschean superman's creative infantilism.

If Strauss or Plato were Nietzschean or modern, they would have had no use for the exotericism essential to philosophy but meaningless for liberalism (nihilism). What do liberals or nihilists, men for whom life is as pointless as death, have to lose by being honest about their nihilism! I see that honesty as the only morality. For it, any attempt to be illiberal, to give reasons, to justify anything, is "morally" repellent.

Professor Rosen prefers Strauss' "mature works" in which he claims "there is a touch of Dostoyevsky in the style of Jane Austen" to "Strauss' last several books" which "are much more inaccessible." He "takes this to reflect a diminution of power (Strauss was in poor health in the last decade of his life) rather than a substantial change of position." Those last works include The Argument and the Action of Plato's "Laws". Their main concern is philosophy's crucial fight, the war between philosophy and politics in the philosopher's soul, a battle which must be presented exoterically to unphilosophic citizens and anti-philosophic pseudo-liberals.

From the Socratic point of view of Strauss' last books, the illiberal Dorians of Plato's Laws (and Socrates' pious accusers in the Apology) are more philosophic -- because more political -- than pseudo-liberals (Rosen or Bloom) or liberals (me). My chief difference from them -- a civil war within liberalism as it were -- springs from my awareness of how political philosophers are and how unpolitical (nihilist) we liberals

are. This awareness also permits me to grasp why Strauss was more attracted to the political theologian Schmitt's pious effort to destroy liberalism than to Kojève's pseudo-liberal effort to perfect it, that is, to moralize its atheism. Lack of this awareness is responsible for Schmitt's absence and Kojève's presence in the article on Strauss in Cropsey's History of Political Philosophy.

Strauss' conservatism, his arguments on behalf of "the philosophical significance of the rural gentleman," of pious Dorians, is "intrinsically absurd" only to liberals. Conservatism, as Strauss' political philosophy and Schmitt's political theology understood it, fights to conserve illiberalism against liberal determination to create "a world of fun, a world devoid of seriousness."[16] Schmitt is primarily a political theologian not a Nietzschean or Heideggerian historicist, an atheist, nihilist, relativist, legal positivist or nazi.

> [His] strict argument against the possibility of natural right (as distinguished from the argument that is meant merely to show the disastrous consequences of natural right for the positive legal order) is based on `the undeniable truth that nothing eternal and absolute exists except the One Whom man cannot comprehend, but only divine in a spirit of faith', that is, on the assumption `that the standards with reference to which we pass judgment on the historical, positive law ... are themselves absolutely the progeny of their time and are always historical and relative.'[17]

Honest liberalism (nihilism) is Schmitt (or Kierkegaard) minus the piety, the faith in that "undeniable truth." Only then would Schmitt's political theology be the nihilism, relativism, or historicism wrongly ascribed to him by most of his critics. That nihilism, what Strauss called Spinoza's Machiavellian "theology," not Schmitt's political theology, is the main enemy of Strauss' platonic Judaism.

To be sure, Schmitt's political theology is compromised by its adherence to what Strauss condemned as Spinozist-Christian Judaism whose god is beyond good and evil (and good and bad). That god, the apotheosis of nihilist freedom, creates everything *ex nihilo*. His arbitrary will is the ultimate ground of morality, politics and religion. Created by "the one whom man cannot comprehend but only divine in a spirit of faith," his ways (providence) must be inscrutable.[18]

Unlike the platonic god ("Demiurge") of Strauss' official Judaism who acts *sub ratione boni*, the will of Schmitt's Spinozist-Christian god

is restrained by nothing -- and only nothing! Consequently, in his unsuccessful attempt to convert Schmitt from Spinozist to Platonic Judaism, Strauss prudently refuses to mention the Christian orthodoxies preventing Schmitt's theology from being really political -- e.g., the corruption of man's nature through original sin.[19] Strauss, not Schmitt, realized that Schmitt's determination to rescue illiberalism (religion, politics, morality) from liberalism presupposed Platonic, not Spinozist (Christian) Judaism, orthodox Judaism not orthodox Christianity. Strauss noted that Schmitt, however reluctantly, remained a prisoner of the liberalism which he loathed. He continued to put his faith in the goodness of an essentially inscrutable -- because nihilist -- creation and providence, a faith which Strauss held responsible for mankind's "incredible effeminating or spoiling."[20] Strauss never forgot what it means to be a Jew, even -- and especially -- in regimes dominated by the pseudo-liberal orthodoxies of Spinozist-Christian Judaism. He knew those "orthodoxies" were grounded in science and therefore opposed to official Judaism's philosophic (platonic) core. In this he was unique.[21]

What Schmitt and, more consistently, Strauss, shared with pious Dorians was abhorrence of liberalism's atheism or nihilism, its tyrannic unconcern with traditionally accepted standards of legitimacy, its refusal to justify its science before the bar of that legitimacy. Revulsion at this refusal was responsible for Schmitt's attack on H. Blumenberg's (*Die Legitimität der Neuzeit*) advocacy of a self-legitimating modern freedom, an "absolute anti-absolutism" as Schmitt called it, for which all political theologies are antiquated nonsense:

> Blumenberg's fundamental concern is with man's self-empowerment and with man's desire for knowledge about which he says explicitly that it 'requires no justification, it justifies itself; it owes nothing to god or to divine revelation ... On the contrary it rests on its own self-evidence which neither god nor man can escape' ... On the horizon of a self-empowering newness (Neuheit), there follows necessarily the rejection of any need for justification. Why should the really new need to justify itself before the existing, the old which stands in the new's way? This old is, after all, not really relevant to the needs of the new ... to be sure, the old word, hubris, would be obsolete for modernity (Neuzeit) and would be perceived as outdated gibberish with theological overtones.[22]

For Schmitt, modernity's nihilist freedom is satanic *hubris*, the reason for man's corruption of his nature through original sin. For Schmitt, as for Bart (below, "Reply to Butterworth"), modernity's nihilism is Hell. Those condemned to eternal damnation experience no need to justify anything done by them: for genuine liberalism (science) there is no justification (reason, cause) for anything. This nihilism is fought by Schmitt's political theology and, more consistently, by Strauss' political philosophy.

For Strauss' political philosophy, his platonic Judaism, man's nature and its natural good cannot be changed (corrupted) by god or man. Consequently Strauss interprets modernity's atheism not as *hubris* or original sin, but as lack of philosophy, lack of insight into one's ignorance, one's inability to choose between philosophy, serious questioning of one's moral-political authorities, and unquestioning loyalty. Thus he considers medieval philosophy superior to the modern science which successfully rebelled against it. Actually Strauss contrasts modern to medieval philosophy, but there is no modern philosophy, only modern science.

> The most fundamental question of philosophy, the question of its own legitimacy and necessity, is no longer a question for modern (science) ... This fact alone can assure us from the outset, that medieval (Jewish) philosophy is distinguished by a philosophic radicalism which is absent from modern (science) or that it is, in the most important respect, superior to modern (science).[23]

For medieval Jewish philosophy, the question of its own legitimacy was central, as it always must be for philosophy. Modernity's liberal refusal to justify itself (or anything else) is sparked by knowledge of reality's nihilism. Lack of this knowledge is responsible for Strauss' preference for medieval Jewish philosophy over medieval Christian "philosophy" and especially over modern science.

Schmitt showed that he knew what Strauss was about -- and why he opposed Strauss -- when, in commenting on the Strauss-Kojève exchange, he called Strauss the only philosopher among his critics.[24] Few of Strauss' contemporaries, and practically no professional "philosophers" realized, as Schmitt did, that Strauss was the most philosophic among them. Unlike Bloom's philosopher-kings and Rosen's philosopher-gods, those glorifications of pseudo-liberalism, Schmitt treasured the illiberalism shared by religion, morality, politics

and philosophy. He was, therefore, less deceived than Bloom or Rosen or Kojève by pseudo-liberal obfuscation of liberalism's nihilism. He believed that only his Christian piety saved him from liberalism's abyss. He did not perceive, as Strauss did, that his Spinozist-Christian Judaism was the apotheosis of that abyss: orthodox Christianity is far closer than orthodox Judaism to liberalism. Strauss unsuccessfully attempted to alert Schmitt to this danger. He saw Schmitt as potentially philosophic as, in a way, all pious or political men are. To actualize this potentiality, their politics or piety must be yoked to serious questioning of it, a rare and most unlikely combination. However, without pious moral-political commitment, philosophy's necessary condition, Straussian education is impossible. That is why Strauss preferred Schmitt to Kojève. Strauss' praise of Schmitt's judgment is not merely prudent flattery. It is informed by realization that the philosophic potential present in Schmitt is rare -- and becoming ever more rare -- in the intellectuals produced by (and producing) pseudo-liberal regimes:

> Permit me just once to say openly that the interest which you have shown for my Hobbes studies represents the highest honor and the strongest confirmation of my scholarship which I have received and which I could ever conceive.[25]

Chapter 10

The Closing of the Philosophic Mind: A Review of Bloom's Closing of the American Mind

Error is not blindness, error is cowardice.
-- Nietzsche

Professor Bloom shares the error informing this book with all pseudo-liberals. That error is their unwillingness to face up to the nihilism or atheism responsible for their liberal subordination of politics to individual freedom or self-interest. By liberal I mean anyone who believes that the individual is more important than the state; individual liberation takes precedence over political obligation -- however that liberation is interpreted. Bloom's brand of liberalism gives rise to his preference for philosophers over non-philosophers, for philosophy over politics, for Socrates over Achilles, for peace over war.

The anger or moral indignation of Achilles, the chief political passion, is, for Bloom, "of all the experiences of the soul the most inimical to reason and hence to the university." He sees it as the passion most hostile to philosophy. To be sure, moral indignation lacks the aesthetic charms and daintiness of Mozart to whom Bloom's good students are eagerly introduced.

Moral indignation is more akin to "McCarthy and those like him" whom Bloom castigates as "clearly nonacademic and antiacademic, the barbarians at the gates." This pseudo- liberal taste does not place Bloom in the academic minority: "Most professors were against McCarthy." He is outraged that leftist intellectuals (e.g., the AAUP) opposed to McCarthy were not opposed to leftist student threats to academic freedom in the late sixties. Against these threats, Bloom, the opponent of

moral indignation (politics) in academics, is indignant. For those faculty-student disrupters were hostile to Bloom's philosophers:

> The tiny band of men who participate fully in (philosophy) are the soul of the university ... However bad universities may have been ... there was always a divination that an Aristotle or a Newton was what they were all about.

If moral indignation were anti-philosophic and philosophy is the soul of the university, Bloom's indignation (at threats to "philosophy" and its university) would reveal his hostility to the university's very soul. But it is not moral indignation, but Bloom's liberal contempt for it, which is anti-philosophic.

Bloom, however unwillingly, is opposed both to philosophy and the university. I do not fault him for this opposition, only for the lack of courage to acknowledge its liberalism or nihilism. In reality, Bloom shares my liberalism (nihilism) however much our agreement is obfuscated by his need for academically acceptable (pseudo-liberal) fig-leaves to hide his nihilist nakedness -- e.g., his championing of "great-books," anti-McCarthyism, and Mozart.

I found the chapter informed by Bloom's indignation, his political condemnation of his colleagues of the late sixties, to be the most lively and alive part of the book. It showed that politics, and therefore philosophy, has not yet been completely conquered by Bloom's liberalism. He still has a bit of chaos (politics) in him, although not nearly enough to give birth to a "dancing star."

I agree with Bloom's liberal prejudice that politics and its indignation obfuscates the truth about oneself and one's world: "It is essential not to make the pursuit of truth dependent on what is politically relevant." I also agree with his Thrasymachean contention that "ultimately the only authority in America" is "the enormous majority." Opposing nihilists such as Thrasymachus, Bloom and myself, Lincoln insisted that the "principle of equality" and not "the enormous majority" was "ultimately the only authority in America." Lincoln and his best contemporary student, Harry Jaffa, have far more in common with Socrates than Thrasymachus, Bloom, or I do. We neither are nor -- if we dare to know ourselves accurately -- want to be philosophic. Bloom lacks this self-knowledge. Instead he deplores philosophy's dethroning "by political and theoretical democracy ... democracy took away philosophy's privileges ... In America anyhow, everybody has a philosophy."

Bloom wants to turn this around, making politics subservient to philosophy and its university. "Never did I think that the university was properly ministerial to the society around it. Rather I thought and think that society is ministerial to the university." This ambition is political and springs from a misunderstanding of what philosophy is -- and what a school, an institution informed by philosophy -- is.

Nietzsche knew better. His opposition to Socrates was directed against both philosophy and schools shaped by it. Bloom sees that, for Nietzsche, the problem of Socrates is the problem. He wrongly interprets Nietzsche's opposition to Socrates as "a classic philosophic disputation," part of an eternal dialogue among a few cosmopolitan intellectuals of all ages who, for Bloom, constitute "the real community of man, in the midst of all the self-contradictory simulacra of community." These cosmopolitans are united by "their common concern for the good ... the only real common good ... this is the meaning of the riddle of the improbable philosopher-kings. They have a true community that is exemplary for all other communities." This community is the heart of Bloom's university and its education. Not Nietzsche's! Unlike Bloom, Rousseau or Marx, Nietzsche knew the Hell created by liberalism's liberation from politics, its "withering away of the state:" only a superman could experience that Hell without degeneration.

Nietzsche knew that real liberalism precluded Socratic dialogues. For its nihilism, there is nothing common -- and nothing individual! To be something rather than nothing required Nietzsche's rejection of reason and science (knowledge of reality) in favor of his desperate, pseudo-liberal faith in the redemptive virtue of a Dionysian unconscious and its willing. The horror of Nietzsche's Dionysus, its essential destructiveness and Wagnerian love of death, is clearer in Mann's Death in Venice and its "cries of the damned plunging into nothingness."

Far from sharing Bloom's reverence for his true community of philosopher-kings and their ageless dialogues, Nietzsche wanted to purge his state of anyone with a university education: "I would drive out of my ideal state the so-called `educated' just as Plato drove out the poets; this is my terrorism."[1]

Nietzsche's terrorism against Bloom's revered university springs from rejection of the heart of Socrates and of philosophy, the illiberal faith in a non-arbitrary, eternal good somehow knowable, or at least divinable, by a pure mind. From a philosophic or Socratic point of view, rejection of this faith -- which philosophers experience as more than mere faith or opinion -- is nihilism's core. It is the common

ground of all liberalism's liberations from Aristotle to Marx and Nietzsche.

Nietzsche criticizes those philosophers, "the famous wise men" responsible for Bloom's university, for their enslavement to politics. However much they pretend to transpolitical vistas unsullied by indignation or anger (a powerful political pretence!), they really are victims of the "tarantula," the spirit of revenge, that is, of politics. They are enslaved by common-sense, the herd-instinct, and its essentially moral-political bias. They are pseudo-liberals, nihilists too cowardly to acknowledge the nihilism sparking their liberalism.

Common sense, the herd instinct, is never egalitarian. It always inculcates one chief care in all herd members, to get what is good for oneself, to live a good life. This care is informed by the moral-political orthodoxies of one's "cave" or herd. Unlike unphilosophic herd members, philosophic herd members turn this care into a question whose adequate answer forever eludes them. Philosophers, that is, philosophic herd members, spend their lives striving to answer their herd's chief question. Consequently philosophers always are radically political. There are no apolitical (liberal) philosophers, only philosophic herd members.

The philosophic (illiberal) primacy of the moral-political question is not revealed by rational inquiry since it sets the goal of all rational inquiry. Faith in its primacy is forced upon both philosophic and unphilosophic herd members by what Nietzsche in his Joyful Science calls the strongest instinct of any herd. In his Zarathustra he rightly discerns enslavement to the herd instinct as the hallmark of "the famous wise men" comprising Bloom's "true community that is exemplary for all other communities."

What Bloom calls "the uncompromising difference that separates the philosophers" from non-philosophers (that is, illiberals from liberals) is not about death and dying, as he believes, but about whether the true common good -- without which both philosophy and politics is meaningless -- exists. Like all good herd members, the philosophers claim to know -- know, not merely believe! -- that it exists, although they, unlike unphilosophic herd members, believe that they lack an adequate grasp of it. Like good citizens, they see acquisition of this knowledge both as their most pressing practical need and the main object of their theoretical inquiry. Unlike Aristotle, Rousseau or Bloom, philosophers do not distinguish between theory and practice, between theoretical (philosophic) and practical (moral-political) virtue. Their main practical concern is also their main theoretical concern. Their

thought never transcends the original illiberal orientation of the cave in which their birth (nature) roots them.

Scientists or sophists, not philosophers, consider themselves liberal, liberated from their "cave," beyond good and evil. Like all unphilosophic herd members, they believe they can adequately determine what truly is good for themselves; philosophers are permeated by the sting of the awareness that they can not. Thus the main question for philosophers is whether the good life is philosophy (questioning the notion of goodness dominant in one's cave) or unquestioning loyalty: philosophy or politics? This is the never settled question for philosophers. Philosophers are in an untenable psychological tension between their need for unquestioning loyalty (which their ignorance does not permit them to really discredit) and their need to seriously question that loyalty. Heidegger's *Rektoratsrede* reflects a serious attempt in our century to recover awareness of philosophy's necessarily illiberal rootedness. If Bloom really were interested in being philosophic, he would have taken this crucial aspect of the *Rektoratsrede* much more seriously. Although Heidegger hardly ever mentions Socrates, there is something Socratic here.

Like Socrates, Lincoln, or Jaffa, philosophers must experience that depth of loyalty to the "gods" of their "cave." They cannot, like Bloom, Machiavelli, or Aristotle consider "it essential not to make the pursuit of truth dependent on what is politically relevant." For what is most relevant politically is precisely what is most relevant philosophically -- the need to know "the only real common good." It is therefore not sufficient philosophically to declare "I hold there is no sin but ignorance," unless the man asserting it also has, like Lincoln or Jaffa, an unquestioning (and therefore "ignorant") rootedness in his herd's confidence that "god," a true non-arbitrary standard of goodness and right, exists. In a nihilist (liberal) universe, this naive confidence, inspired by one's moral-political roots, is the ground of the illiberal delusion informing politics and philosophy. Bloom's pseudo-liberal "philosophers" (and their university) are not aware that this illiberal naivete is the necessary, if not sufficient, condition for genuine philosophy. Consequently his philosophy really is Laputan science, floating on empty air. Philosophic ignorance of the true common good precludes Laputan confidence in the superiority of Bloom's philosopher-kings to ordinary herd members. (Indeed it precludes my characterization of political men as mere herd members!) Above all, it precludes the pseudo-liberalism dominating Bloom and most of the critics of his book.

Weber's distinction between facts and values is philosophic insofar as it implies that the decisive alternative is philosophy or politics, reason or revelation; not insofar as it legitimates a meaningless science of "facts." But Weber, like Bloom or myself, was basically a scientist, not a philosopher. Still he realized that the choice between ultimate values (philosophy or politics) is far more crucial morally than science, a trivial nihilist affair. He did not, like Bloom, hurl philosophy into this emptiness (by elevating it above politics).

Genuine philosophy is a risky business, a two-edged sword directed against politics in the name of philosophy ("I hold there is no sin but ignorance.") but also against philosophy in the name of politics (McCarthyism -- "my country, right or wrong!") Philosophers remain true to their illiberal roots while seriously questioning their worth, a difficult, necessarily esoteric enterprise.

Bloom wrongly believes that Thrasymachus "sees the truth about Socrates" when he "sees that Socrates does not respect the city." Insofar as he is philosophic, Socrates both respects and does not respect the city -- but the respect, the illiberal faith in the primacy of the main moral-political concern, is primary for philosophy. Only scientists such as Bloom or Thrasymachus can simply not respect the city. The consistent elaboration of this liberal subordination of politics to "philosophy" is clearest not in Bloom's book or Aristotle's Metaphysics but in Nietzsche's Joyful Science or Beyond Good and Evil. Without daring to realize it, Bloom is closer to Nietzsche or Aschenbach than to Socrates.

There is in Bloom's pedagogy much of that scientific (liberal) tyranny satirized by Aristophanes and Swift which liberates men from the actual politics of their herd and, therefore, from philosophy, in favor of the apolitical "community" of philosopher-kings, the only real community for Bloom.[2]

I doubt that there is anything like an "American Mind" except in college catalogues and other propaganda. The notion that it is closing or closed springs from Bloom's unphilosophic prejudice that "society is ministerial to the university." Thus America's refusal to enslave itself to Bloom's university is said to close its mind. Bloom's book should be called The Closing of the Philosophic Mind or Beyond Good and Evil or more accurately, Heart of Darkness or, paraphrasing Bloom on Swift: How Scientists Exploit The Nonscientists So As To Live Their Version Of The Contemplative Life.

Following Nietzsche, Weber realized that science, knowledge of reality, means nihilism. Unlike Nietzsche, but true to Schopenhauer, Nietzsche's teacher, Weber despaired of overpowering reality's ni-

hilism: the heart of existence, including all willing, is nothing. Nietzsche saw that the herd instinct inspiring the illiberal faith that moral-political cares, the concern with the good, are primary also inspires the illiberal illusion of living in a coherent, intelligible world in which those cares are at home. Deprived of this comforting myth, men would realize that life is a chaos of empty experience, impressions as Hume called them. As "Europe's first perfect nihilist" Nietzsche knew that science was nihilist, revealing a world consisting of nothing but interpretations, hypotheses, points of view, methods of experimenting, or to speak bluntly as recommended by Bloom, nothing but prejudices, bigotries, superstitions.

No man can avoid nihilism or be less nihilist than another. Everything, particularly all moral-political passions ("values"), is nothing but empty impressions. Thus Céline is not, as Bloom supposes, more authentically nihilist than Mann or Camus. Céline's futile effort to be something, to transcend nihilism, is no more realistic than Aschenbach's – or, for that matter, than Socrates' or Lincoln's or anyone else's. Dostoyevsky's underground man rightly observes that nobody knowledgeable about himself and his world can be or become anything – not even an insect: even to be lazy would require an impossible creation *ex nihilo*! To be sure, Bloom (or the victory of Russia over America) might disrupt the dreams of liberal democratic students whose pseudo-liberal bigotries tend to be soft and permissive with the murderous (nazi-communist) nightmares of a Céline or of Nietzsche's pale criminal.

When attacked for despising pseudo-liberals, men who experience nihilism as joyous liberation, I said that I rejected this prejudice, but I despised only men who believe their views of anything are more than bigotry or superstition. This seems to me the scientific attitude, the experience that all knowledge is bigotry or prejudice including of course, the assertion that all knowledge is bigotry.

This scientific and therefore essentially bigoted awareness made Nietzsche and Weber see that "the single fundamental issue is the relation between reason or science and the human good."[3] It is why in Nietzsche "the joy of liberation" that one finds in "big babies" like Marx "has turned into terror ... Nietzsche replaces easygoing or self-satisfied atheism with agonized atheism, suffering its human consequences." Rather than suffer those consequences he would have preferred to be a university professor but, as he wrote Burckhardt (January 6, 1889), he could not push his private egoism that far. His courage compelled him to realize that he, like all life, was a god whose creation was in reality

nothing created out of nothing! He would have been far happier as a pseudo-liberal professor cowardly clinging to the illusion of membership in the "true community that is exemplary for all other communities."

Instead his genuinely liberal courage doomed him to confront life's only serious struggle: the war between reason or science and passion. Reason (insight into reality's nihilism) is repellent to passion unless passion is destroyed or emasculated by science (no more chaos to give birth to dancing stars). All passions not so emasculated (depoliticized) remain teleological, striving to obtain some good or avoid some evil. Consequently all passions are irrational, subsisting on faith in common sense's teleological world of goods to pursue and selves to pursue them.

When genuine science, liberal education, forces abandonment of this faith, the wrath and frustration of the passions is directed against reality itself. Like pseudo-liberalism (their external political reflection) the rabid, because enlightened, passions now demand their "rights." This demand becomes more strident, more Communist or Nazi, the more its inanity is realized. No powerful desire can tolerate science or genuinely liberal, liberating education, unless it is domesticated, that is, degraded into uplifting propaganda. Aschenbach's refusal to domesticate science leaves him powerless against the insane, destructive fury of "Dionysus." The same courage is responsible for Nietzsche's resolve to embrace an insane apotheosis rather than become a university professor "whose career has been an unusually happy one" and who therefore experiences "no need to prove the importance of education."

Bloom's celebration of the university and science (of science, and not, as he supposes, of philosophy!) is accurately evaluated in his quotation from Weber's Science as a Vocation:

> Finally, although a naive optimism may have celebrated science ... as the path to happiness, I believe I can leave this entire question aside in light of the annihilating critique which Nietzsche has made of `the last men' who `have discovered happiness'. Who still believes in this with the exception of a few big babies in university chairs or in editorial offices?[4]

Bloom seems most alive and lively at his most political, indignantly censuring democratic-egalitarian threats to the university inspired by his philosopher-kings. This pseudo-liberal indignation shows that he took Plato's Republic too seriously because he did not take its ignorance of the good seriously enough. Thus he transformed its phi-

losophy, its wavering between political repression and philosophic freedom, into the unmitigated terror responsible for Aschenbach's "cries of the damned plunging into nothingness."

In agreement with Bloom, the present editors of the Cropsey History of Political Philosophy rejected Jaffa's request that Heidegger and Burke be balanced by Churchill and Lincoln. Prevented by their scientific orientation from being as philosophic as Jaffa, they did not want to sully a history of "philosophy" with mere statesmen. Had they had the courage of their real convictions, their editorial policy would be that demanded at the end of Hume's Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding: eliminate (actually Hume advocates burning) all non-scientific (that is philosophic-political) books. Begin with Hobbes and Nietzsche with perhaps a bow to Aristotle for his opposition to Socrates' conviction that all goods are commensurable. Strauss too would be purged (as he is from Bloom's book with one minor exception) since he obviously sided with philosophy and the ancients insofar as they were philosophic.

The result of these purges would be scientific progress over philosophic superstition or, more accurately, liberal "progress" to the realization that scientific enlightenment means substituting one bigotry for another; there is no non-arbitrary reason for anything. Bloom at times seems to disagree, but his disagreement is vitiated by his confusion of scientists with philosophers as in the following statement:

> We have reasons for what we do. It is a sign of our humanity and our possibility of community ... There may be some people who don't feel they have to make a case for themselves, but they must be either tramps or philosophers.[5]

The philosopher's illiberal rootedness compels him to seek knowledge of the true good which alone could justify his enterprise.

A similar error makes Bloom overemphasize Plato's opposition to Homer, the creator of Achilles, that personification of the spirit of vengeance, moral indignation, which Nietzsche rightly finds at the heart of all politics and, therefore, of all philosophy. Anger or indignation, the spirit of revenge, like philosophy, arise from the illiberal faith that one has or needs goods without which life becomes unlivable. Hatred (Bloom's reaction to those apostate intellectuals of the late sixties) is the natural reaction to whoever threatens those goods. Nietzsche's superman is characterized by liberalism's redemption from this spirit of revenge or hatred. Nietzsche and Rousseau, not Socrates and Plato, want

this redemption from the illiberal heart of politics. Without the courage to see it, Bloom has written a more Nietzschean than Platonic Book. The book on education for Bloom is not the Republic, as he insists, but Beyond Good and Evil or Death in Venice!

Reflecting on these problems, I was reminded of Conrad's reply to Cunninghame-Graham's suggestion that Singleton, the simple, upright seaman of the Nigger of the Narcissus, be better educated:

> You say `Singleton with an education.' Everything is possible. However I think Singleton with an education is impossible ... Would you seriously, of malice prepense, cultivate in that unconscious man the power to think? Then he would become conscious -- and much smaller -- and very unhappy. Now he is simple and great ... Would you seriously wish to tell such a man `Know thyself! Understand that you are nothing, less than a shadow, more insignificant than a drop of water in the ocean, more fleeting than the illusion of a dream?' Would you?[6]

Chapter 11

Addendum to Bloom Review: Heidegger's Socrates and the Impurity of Philosophic Greatness

Bloom wrongly ascribes to Heidegger an obsessive concern with Socrates. Nietzsche maybe, but not Heidegger who interpreted Socrates as a pure, not a great, philosopher. So far as I know, he mentions Socrates only twice in his published work. That occurs in comments (*Stundenübergänge*) before the second and third lectures of What Calls to Thought? *(Was Heisst Denken?)*. There Heidegger calls Socrates a pure, indeed the purest, but not a great, philosopher. He compares thinkers to men in a storm *(Zugwind)*. Philosophers keep themselves exposed to the storm's full blast. Non-philosophers or impure philosophers escape that blast by publishing.

Socrates, the purest philosopher, wrote nothing. Had there been no Plato, Xenophon or Aristophanes, his purity would have died unsung. Heidegger cites Nietzsche's self-description:

> A man for whom nearly all books have become empty, who has faith only in a few men of the past that they possessed enough depth not to write what they knew.[1]

But, as Heidegger notes, Nietzsche, like all post-Socratics, wrote; his thinking was great (scientific) not pure (philosophic).

I suggest this interpretation of Heidegger's Socrates. Philosophy is a war between philosophy and politics, liberalism and illiberalism, between serious questioning of one's strongest moral-political commitments and unquestioning loyalty. In this fight, both sides agree that god, a true non-arbitrary moral standard exists. It is a struggle between philosophic passions (which deny either side an adequate command of

its true interest) and political passions (which lay claim to that sufficiency of knowledge). The main battlefield is the philosopher's soul.

So long as his philosophic purity remains intact, he gives whole-souled allegiance neither to his philosophic (liberal) nor to his political (illiberal) desires. He cannot mount a satisfactory defense of either. Legitimation of philosophy would mean its transformation into politics, into Professor Bloom's truth party. This is precisely what "philosophers" who publish do. They generally believe that they know enough to make philosophy publicly defensible. Thus, according to Heidegger, post-Socratic philosophers transformed philosophy into literature or science:

> Thinking becomes literature. This has determined the fate of Western science which through medieval doctrine became modern science *(scientia)* ... the sciences have bounded out of philosophy[2]

– that is they lept out of "philosophers" whose immoderation compromised philosophy's purity by publicly defending it.

Unable to moderate their craving for legitimacy, their need to prove the moral-political superiority of their truth party, they "demonstrated" that "philosophy" was a great, indeed the greatest, business. No such demonstration is available to pure philosophers. Plato was not philosophically pure insofar as he wrote, but he wrote mostly dialogues of the purest philosopher, Socrates. In this ironic way, he kept alive awareness of the unphilosophic character of all literary philosophy, of all legitimations of philosophy.

Without such justification, without becoming literature, philosophy's existence would have remained precarious, subject to Socrates' fate. So Plato and the post-Platonics embarked on literary careers to make the world safe for philosophy, to endow "philosophy" with redeeming social value. For the post-Platonics this usually led to forgetting philosophy's essential vulnerability, its inability to mount an adequate defense. Bloom's allies and most of his enemies enjoy the fruits of that oblivion. Contemplating them raises the question of the philosophic wisdom of not having let philosophy die with its few pure representatives in Athens or elsewhere.[3] Would death not have been preferable to the price of legitimation (greatness), philosophy's decay into literature or science: "The political action of the philosophers on behalf of philosophy has achieved full success. One sometimes wonders whether it has not been far too successful."[4]

Chapter 12

Review of Butterworth's Commentary on The Reveries of the Solitary Walker[1]

"But I, detached from men and from everything, what am I?"

-- The First Reverie

Professor Butterworth's main flaw is one shared with most, if not all, scholars. It is inability to grasp just how radically apolitical genuine science -- and therefore Rousseau -- is. To be sure, Butterworth notes Rousseau's apolitical bent. However he misses its uncompromising radicality. This radicality is the hallmark of science as opposed to philosophy. I say "science" and not "modern science" since there was no science as such prior to the modern science inaugurated by Bacon and Descartes and perfected by Rousseau and Nietzsche. Instead there was aristotelian or epicurean or thomist science etc. Each of these pseudo-sciences was subordinate to some philosophy or theology, some notion of man's highest good. Science as such, Rousseau's science, liberates itself from any philosophic or theological control. The Reveries is Rousseau's most scientific description of himself, god and the universe.

Butterworth wrongly believes that Rousseau's "antiteleological bias" is responsible for an inability to explain the whole: "all he can hope to do is to enjoy being a part of the whole." The same error gives rise to Butterworth's low opinion of Rousseau's vaunting "botany as an amusement ... a pastime that requires a few instruments and no learning ... the perfect pastime for a man who loves idleness provided that no motive of interest or pride ever troubles the pastime." Butterworth also rebukes Rousseau's willfulness in denigrating sciences not conducive to his own lazy tastes. The error common to all these observations is summarized in Butterworth's claim that "despite the stark title of the work, there is reason to wonder just how serious Rousseau is when he

declares that he is no longer interested in acting as a citizen." The mistake sparking this claim informs most, if not all, contemporary academic life, not just Butterworth's Rousseau interpretation. It arises from ignorance of what it means to be political or apolitical, philosophic or scientific. Rousseau was one of the very few real scientists, men capable of distinguishing science's core from its window dressing. That core is reduction of all reality to experience or experimentation. Science is the realization that whatever is experienced -- a self, a world, the law of contradiction, a god or anything else -- is nothing more than its being experienced. Science's reality is nothing but empty experiences, impressions as Hume called them. From a scientific point of view everything high or low, including the distinction between high and low, becomes a way or method of experiencing, a point of view, an interpretation. There is nothing inherently rigorous or mathematical in scientific method which, rightly understood as it rarely is, means nothing more than empty experience, any way or method of experiencing -- whether it be that of an active tiger, a lazy Rousseau, or a hard-working Darwin.

Not science, but its window dressing or propaganda has sparked so-called knowledge explosions requiring more than "few instruments and no learning." Not willfulness, but scientific self-knowledge informed Rousseau's insight that only the most lazy are truly scientific! His reduction of reality to reveries means that no scientific grounds exist for distinguishing (private) dreams or reveries and the (public) state of wakefulness. The expressions "scientific reverie" and "scientific method" are tautologies; the reality uncovered by science is nothing but reveries or methods. Science, genuine knowledge, reveals a reality which promotes laziness by providing nothing for which to strive. As Rousseau's student, Goethe, notes at the beginning of his Faust, all striving is the work of the devil. Unlike the lazy Rousseau, the always striving Faust is unscientific, preferring death to the divine self-satisfaction of solitary reverie. Both Faust and his god admit that this preference makes no sense, although they both praise it: all human striving arises from illusion, not science.

As a scientist, Rousseau finds man's most abiding illusion in philosophy, in the political faith responsible for philosophy. Although it obviously is impossible to experience anything but experiences, this political faith, the herd instinct, creates in men (and beasts) the illusion that they have "selves" which exist in a coherent, intelligible world, not in a chaos of empty scientific reveries or methods. For herd instinct faith the main passion is precisely the one which Rousseau seeks to

avoid: the desire to get what is good for oneself and the consequent hatred of whoever prevents this. This hatred, moral indignation, is at the heart of the herd instinct informing both politics and philosophy. This same herd instinct which inspires man's faith in his goals, his teleology, also inspires the faith that he inhabits an intelligible universe in which those goals are at home.

In Rousseau's essentially private, incommunicable world of scientific reveries or methods, there is no place for philosophic dialogues or indeed for any real communication or community. That is why Rousseau -- or any scientist -- can write only for himself. Contrary to Butterworth's doubts, Rousseau means it quite literally when "he declares that he is no longer interested in acting as a citizen." No scientifically enlightened man could be! Inability to grasp scientific liberation from the herd instinct also makes Butterworth believe that Rousseau presupposes the existence of either himself or others as more than empty reveries. Nor does "reverie thrive on our ability to move away from the senses of the body and from our awareness of daily needs, civic or personal." For Rousseau, everything, including bodies and their needs, is nothing but reveries. Depending upon their tastes or "values", different men prefer different reveries.

Scientific life is radically apolitical. Butterworth does not grasp philosophy's dependence upon politics, upon hatred of enemies or moral indignation. These passions obfuscate the reality revealed by Rousseau's scientific reduction of everything to reveries or methods. The bridge to the highest hope of Rousseau's best student, Nietzsche, was that man be rescued from the spirit of revenge, hatred of enemies. Unlike Butterworth, Nietzsche and Rousseau realized that this rescue mission means the death of philosophy precisely because it means the death of politics, the Marxist withering away of the state. In this crucial sense, Butterworth wrongly opposes Aristotle's apolitical science (*theoria*) to Rousseau's reduction of reality to reveries. The real difference is that Rousseau's self-knowledge is more scientific than Aristotle's. Consequently he realized that this reduction informs all apolitical thought, all thought not propelled by the herd or political instinct. In opposition to Plato, Aristotle insisted that philosophic excellence was independent of, and superior to, political excellence. The consistent elaboration of that independence is not Aristotle's Physics or Metaphysics but Rousseau's Reveries of the Solitary Walker.

Chapter 13

Professor Butterworth's Reply to Neumann

Two considerations prompt this reply to Professor Neumann's review of my interpretative essay on and translation of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's The Reveries of the Solitary Walker. First, his erroneous account of Rousseau's teaching and my explanation of it is founded on phrases wrenched from their original context as well as on an inaccurate representation of their meaning and therefore needs to be corrected so that the issues to which it takes exception can be subjected to the scrutiny they merit. Secondly, in spite of its flaws as an exposition of Rousseau's or my thinking, even in spite of its internal contradictions, Neumann's larger argument warrants further examination. In what follows, I will first show how Rousseau and I have been misrepresented and then explain the shortcomings in Mr. Neumann's attempt to correct the thinking which "informs most, if not all, contemporary academic life."

Professor Neumann contends that Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the man who frequently designated himself "Citoyen de Genève" on the frontispiece of his publications, is radically apolitical. Rousseau is for him an uncompromising scientist, a thinker willing to reduce "all reality to experience or experimentation." Neumann bases this judgment on Rousseau's admission at the end of the Fifth Walk that he sometimes became so absorbed in his reveries as to let his imagination color his surrounding. Insisting that Rousseau thereby lays the groundwork for a "reduction of reality to reveries," Neumann then introduces the term "scientific reverie" as a Rousseauan equivalent of "scientific method," even though it occurs nowhere in his writings.

These assertions constitute in no way an accurate portrayal of Rousseau's thought. They no more capture the argument of the Reveries than of any other work. Indeed, to accept Neumann's characterization of Rousseau as radically apolitical, it would be necessary to cast

aside most of his writings. How, after all, can the author of the Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts, the Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality among Men, the Nouvelle Héloïse, the Emile, the Social Contract, and the Letters from the Mountain be considered apolitical? Even to refuse to consider these writings in order to concentrate on the Confessions, the Dialogues, and the Reveries makes it no easier to validate Neumann's interpretation. In the Confessions, Book IX, Rousseau explains the dominant theme in his thought as follows:

> I saw that everything was radically connected with politics and that however one went about it no people would be anything but what the nature of its government would make it; thus this great question of the best possible government appeared to me to be reducible to this one: what is the nature of the government suitable for forming the most virtuous, the most enlightened, the wisest, in short, taking this word in its largest sense, the best people.

Far from being radically apolitical, Rousseau explicitly declares himself here to be radically political. Instead of reducing reality to reveries, he reduces a much debated philosophical question described by many as idyllic to terms permitting its practical resolution. Nor does Neumann's argument fare any better in the Dialogues, for Rousseau explains the core of his thinking there -- as he does in the Letter to Christophe de Beaumont and in the Emile -- in very much the same terms. It seems, then, that Professor Neumann derives his version of Rousseau's teaching from a very novel reading of the Reveries.

Such a reading stands behind his criticism of my own interpretation of this work. he thinks that I -- like "most, if not all, scholars" -- suffer from "an inability to grasp just how radically apolitical genuine science -- and therefore Rousseau -- is" and that this weakness or flaw arises from our "ignorance of what it means to be political or apolitical, philosophic or scientific." Now, pleased as I am to be included for once with the majority of scholars, I must protest. Since I say nothing about science, genuine or spurious, the basic difference between Neumann and me turns on whether Rousseau is in fact radically apolitical. Why this position cannot be grounded in any of Rousseau's other works has been shown above.

In my Interpretative Essay, I explain at length why Rousseau's understanding of ultimate happiness, a happiness explicitly not within the grasp of most other human beings, is both apolitical and yet dependent

on political order: the solitary enjoyment of the sentiment of existence presupposes that basic human needs are provided for by others who do not -- who cannot -- appreciate such solitude or else it must lead to death, and Rousseau emphatically rejects such a consequence. Rousseau's argument here is admittedly paradoxical. Precisely because it is paradoxical, consciously so I have argued in my essay, it must be considered with some care. My argument in the Interpretative Essay is that Rousseau points here, albeit in an unsatisfactory manner, to the fundamental conflict between the demands or the limited horizon of the city and the appeals or unlimited horizon of philosophy. Such a conflict is also present in Socrates' account of how the guardians trained in philosophy will be forced to abandon their philosophical reflections for a period of time and concern themselves with the affairs of the city; only after this onerous task will they be allowed to return to their philosophical pursuits. Surely, Professor Neumann does not wish to charge Socrates with thereby showing himself to be radically apolitical.

Those interested enough to consult the references Neumann provides for his other criticisms of my interpretation will find that I do not in fact have a "low opinion" of Rousseau's predilection for botany nor do I "rebuke Rousseau's willfulness in denigrating sciences not conducive to his own lazy tastes." I do, however, trace Rousseau's endorsement of ultimate happiness as the solitary enjoyment of the sentiment of existence to his antiteleological bias. Far from refuting this argument, Neumann comes to embrace it himself in the penultimate paragraph of his review. Unfortunately, he is led to this unwitting agreement with me because of his undefended -- and textually indefensible -- assertion that "for Rousseau, everything, including bodies and their needs, is nothing but reveries." Thus even when Neumann is in involuntary agreement with me about Rousseau's teaching, I cannot be in agreement with him. This line of reasoning also leads Neumann to misconstrue my first note to the Fourth Walk as suggesting that Rousseau is a moral relativist, an imprecation that defies common sense.

In sum, the Reveries is a very subtle work. It is a work in which Rousseau merely hints at some of the problems in his teaching, problems of which he was clearly aware. That is, he suggests that neither revelation nor nature can provide the moral values he deems appropriate for others to follow and insinuates that his ultimate happiness is not the kind of contentment he wishes for most of his readers. By means of such indirectness, Rousseau obliges thoughtful readers to consider for themselves whether the values of the city -- any city -- are the highest ones and on what those or any other values are grounded. Though I

fault Rousseau for the implications behind his account of ultimate happiness, I laud him for pointing to this fundamental issue. And I submit that one cannot hope to understand the Reveries without taking note of such nuances -- even hesitations -- in Rousseau's thought.

In his own way, Professor Neumann alludes to these kinds of questions by juxtaposing philosophy and science in his larger argument. According to what he says in the second sentence of his last paragraph and elsewhere, philosophy is the instinct of the guardians as well as of the herd and thus dependent upon a privileged account of the whole -- one which is indefensible on any but its own terms. Philosophy, then is protected by and in turn protects myth. Science on the other hand refuses to come to terms with the needs of the city and wages war against the myths that favor political life. This construction leads Neumann to portray the history of human thought as consisting of two stages: a philosophic stage reaching from Plato until some point in the early sixteenth century which preserves the veil within which political life can flourish, and a scientific stage beginning with Bacon and culminating in Nietzsche which gradually undermines the possibility of viable political community. Such an account is superior, he thinks, to the usual juxtaposition of ancient and modern thought.

It is, to be sure, intriguing. But as I have indicated with reference to his reading of Rousseau, it is inadequate because it depends upon too rigid an interpretation of the authors in question. Nor is his attempt to found his view on Nietzsche persuasive, especially if we recall his contention at the beginning of Beyond Good and Evil that every understanding of science -- as well as that of philosophy -- is based on unproven and unprovable presuppositions.

This said, I shall conclude by noting two positive features of Neumann's larger argument. First it has the merit of attending to Rousseau's attempt to think through the problem of science, an attempt that is especially evident in the Emile but of which traces can be found in his other less well-known writings. Secondly, it draws attention to the breadth of Rousseau's thought and to its enigmatic character. Though contentious and inadequately defended as it stands, Neumann's challenge raises interesting questions. Whether it can withstand attempts to ground it in a closer reading of Rousseau's other works and consideration of their unity as well as in a more careful exposition of Nietzsche's though remains to be seen.

-- *Charles E. Butterworth*
University of Maryland

Chapter 14

Reply to Professor Butterworth

For all those who somehow still had a 'god' for company, what I know as 'solitude' really did not yet exist.
-- Nietzsche

Professor Butterworth wrongly believes that our "basic difference ... turns on whether Rousseau is in fact radically apolitical." Our opposition on that merely scholarly point springs from a crucial disagreement about what it means to be political (or apolitical), philosophic (or scientific), illiberal (or liberal). Butterworth's lack of clarity on these matters hides our basic agreement from him.

To be political it does not suffice to write a Social Contract, a Leviathan, a Concept of the Political or even a Republic -- or to see that "no people would be anything but what the nature of its government would make it." Since Aristotle (not Bacon, as Butterworth believes I believe) politics and philosophy have been eroded by liberalism. Our crucial difference concerns our respective attitude to liberalism and only secondarily our Rousseau and Nietzsche interpretations which, to be sure, are colored by our prejudices about liberalism.

By liberalism I mean the bias that what truly exists is not political obligation (morality), but individual liberation from it, however that liberation is understood theoretically and/or practically: by nature men are individuals not citizens and fathers. Liberalism's liberation is from the moral-political-religious bonds obfuscating one's true nature. In Rousseau's liberalism, the natural is the sweetness of the awareness of one's individual, apolitical existence. By nature, left to themselves without external, always accidental, interferences, men would not even be aware of their need for self-preservation which, for Rousseau, is caused by external threats to the really natural experience. Rousseau interprets all moral-political needs as artificially created by such

threats. Human history, for Rousseau, is the story of this obfuscation of reality or nature by the illiberal illusions created by politics -- or by what Nietzsche called the herd instinct: "Morality is the herd instinct in the individual." Science means getting back to nature, seeing reality (nature) for what it unfortunately is.

Butterworth's confusion on this basic issue prevents his seeing the crucial sense in which my review's interpretation of Rousseau is wrong: Rousseau still is illiberal (philosophic) in his conviction that there is by nature a non-arbitrary good according to which the enlightened individual can take his bearings. On this basis, Rousseau denies that he can become better -- he is, by nature, good. He can only become more moral (virtuous) or political.

Contrary to Butterworth's contention, Rousseau is a moral relativist, for he distinguishes moral from real or natural goodness. Morality (politics) is merely the arbitrary (not by nature necessary) outgrowth of history, the record of the individual's alienation from what really is good for him. Rousseau did not realize, as Nietzsche did, that any appeal to non-arbitrary, natural standards of goodness is still radically political (religious). Insofar as Rousseau believes in such standards, I wrongly called him scientific (apolitical). He still was blinded by the illiberal error of both philosophy and politics.

Nietzsche saw that the hallmark of the philosophers, the "famous wise men" was enslavement to politics, to the people and their herd-instinct. All bestial and human herds inculcate one chief care: the need to secure what is good which, as a herd imposition, always is a common or illiberal good. The sole difference between philosophic and unphilosophic herd members is that philosophers question their herd's moral-political orthodoxies. However in the decisive respect they remain loyal herd members: they do not question the illiberal faith that they have selves and that something really is good for these selves: for them, god is not yet dead! Nietzsche discerns human thought's main error in this Platonic or herd instinct invention of an absolute good and a mind capable of divining it.

Nietzsche saw that the illiberalism inspiring the faith that moral-political cares, the concern with the good, is primary, also inspires the illusion of living in a coherent, intelligible world in which those cares are at home. Deprived of this comforting myth, men would realize that life is a chaos of empty experiences, impressions as Hume called them. As "Europe's first perfect nihilist" Nietzsche realized that science, genuine knowledge of reality, reveals a world of nothing but what Butterworth condemns as "unproven and unprovable presuppositions," empty

points of view, hypotheses -- or, to speak bluntly -- mere prejudice or bias. Here the heart of both politics and philosophy, the concern with the true good, is nothing more than another bigotry, indeed the source of all other bigotries. Science's world is limitless, in principle unbound by any moral-political restraints. Unlike philosophy and politics, science is beyond good and evil (and beyond good and bad).

Butterworth wrongly contrasts "the limited horizon of the city" with the "unlimited horizon of philosophy." Neither philosophy nor politics have unlimited horizons as science (nihilism) does. This is what I meant by Butterworth's confusion of (apolitical) science and (political) philosophy, a pseudo-liberal confusion "which informs most, if not all, contemporary academic life." Nietzsche knew better, rightly noting that the philosophers, "the famous wise men," being radically political, are moved primarily by the "Tarantula's" spirit of revenge, moral indignation, the hatred of whoever or whatever threatens their concern to secure the true good.

More than Rousseau, Nietzsche realized that liberalism's liberation from politics means scientific rejection of any non-arbitrary, natural good -- even the good of Rousseau's solitary dreamer. This rejection is responsible for liberal science's reduction of reality to zero. Rousseau was the last great thinker still clinging to nature as the standard of what truly is good, however sub-human (or even sub-bestial) his natural goodness is. This permitted him still to distinguish, in a non-arbitrary way, between defensible and indefensible self-love, between natural goodness (the sweet sentiment of existing) and its obfuscation by "history."

In Rousseau's "theology," spiritedness, moral indignation, is directed against threats to enjoyment of that natural sweetness. Without those threats, there would have been no history, no evolutionary (or devolutionary) process triggered by spirited determination to eliminate obstacles to satisfaction of natural desire. Man would have remained his natural, sub-human self, intent only upon savoring the sweetness of that divine satisfaction -- much as the original human globs described by Aristophanes in Plato's Symposium. For man's only natural desire is to wallow in the bliss of his sentiment of existing, the divine pleasure recaptured by Rousseau in the "Fifth Walk." That pleasure is good by nature; it alone is divine.

There is nothing by nature good or godly about the artificial pleasures created by history, man's becoming civilized (rational), moral or immoral, and therefore unnatural, bad, unhappy. These are the pleasures of spiritedness, will, and its striving, a striving prone to forget

why it strives. For the spiritedness responsible for civilization and its discontents was, according to Rousseau, originally propelled by the will to remove impediments to natural desire's satisfaction.

Thus Rousseau, like all illiberals or pseudo-liberals, subordinates spiritedness (moral zeal) to his desire for what he regards as by nature good. His spiritedness does not interpret itself as akin to Ahab's war on Moby Dick, the resolve to destroy his liberal reason and the reality reduced by it to zero. Rather Rousseau's spiritedness, the creator of history and its illusions, is in reality, a yearning to abandon history and return to nature, to what truly is good for him. Unless it serves nature in this way, man's spiritedness is, for Rousseau, blind (historical). In this decisive sense, Rousseau remains mired in illiberalism's delusion, the faith in a permanent, non-arbitrary good or god: anybody who believes his views on anything are -- or depend upon -- anything more than bigotries still succumbs to that delusion's obvious charms. Even Nietzsche was incapable of a total break with it. I hold Nietzsche's nihilist view of science more consistently than Nietzsche insofar as he was tempted to believe that his notion of the will to power's eternal return was more than his prejudice.[1] Nietzsche's teacher, Schopenhauer, more consistently asserted the groundlessness of all willing, an insight set to music in the love of death and nothingness informing Wagner's Tristan.

In light of these observations, I want to correct Butterworth's description of my prejudices about "the history of human thought". The philosophical stage does not, as Butterworth believes, go from Plato to Bacon, but only from Plato to Aristotle. Aristotle is the first scientist, the first to claim that individual liberation (in his case only for a few metaphysicians or scientists) is, by nature, better than political obligation. In Nietzsche -- and, more decisively in Schopenhauer, Wagner and myself -- the ultimately nihilist consequences of that liberalism (science) emerge. This emergence is precluded by the illiberalism of both philosophy and politics.

The philosopher's "knowledge" of his ignorance (of the true good) prevents his believing, as Aristotle did, that liberalism's liberation from politics is desirable, that philosophic or intellectual virtue is superior to political virtue. Philosophy always is a two-edged sword -- one directed against politics, seriously questioning one's main moral-political authority, but the other directed against that philosophic questioning in the name of old-fashioned, patriotic rootedness. Philosophers live this unresolved tension between unquestioning loyalty and serious questioning of that loyalty. For their ignorance precludes abandonment of

the illiberal, anti-philosophic roots which determine their lives prior to philosophy's emergence. They do not interpret their relation to those roots as Butterworth does, as mere esoteric efforts to "preserve the veil within which political life can flourish." Such elevation of philosophy over politics is undermined by the philosopher's awareness of his ignorance. Here Butterworth, without realizing it, is talking not about philosophers, but sophists or scientists, men who believe in the superiority of "philosophy" to politics and who therefore moralize "philosophy" into another truth party.

Because Butterworth does not see patriotism as integral to philosophy (integral, not merely a prudential veneer!), he confuses philosophy with science (nihilism). This confusion gives rise to our main difference which is not merely scholarly; it concerns our fundamental prejudices about our selves and our worlds.

Whatever the eternal ambiguities of the philosopher's "averroistic," dual loyalty (not dual truth!) – to philosophy and patriotism – no philosopher ever is convinced that his theoretical activity (questioning) is better than unquestioning political loyalty. He is too permeated by the sting of the realization of his ignorance. Pseudo-liberal intellectuals fail to grasp how political philosophy must be – and how unpolitical (nihilist) they are. This failure prevents Butterworth's noticing why the last line of my review wrongly asserted that the culmination of science (liberalism) was not Aristotle but Rousseau. The real culmination is Nietzsche – or more accurately – Schopenhauer or Wagner or Stavrogin.

Wagner's (or Mann's) Tristan never will appear scientific on the horizon shared by Butterworth with most, if not all, contemporary academic life. Romantic dreamers, they believe, are not scientists! Rousseau did not suffer from their blindness, although his spirited insistence on a natural, non-arbitrary good blurred his remarkably scientific vision.

That spiritedness, a combination of hatred and self-pity, fires philosophy, politics or religion. It has no place in science. Its hallmark is murderous hatred of science and of the truth uncovered by science. At best, it is the last gasp of an honest illiberalism aware of its reduction to zero in reality's nihilism. Its last stand against its inevitable doom recalls the harpooner Tashtego's decision to go down with flags flying after the destruction of Ahab's ship by Moby Dick. Tashtego drowning nailed Ahab's flag to a sinking spar:

> A sky-hawk that tauntingly had followed the main-truck downwards from its natural home among the stars, pecking at the flag and incommoding Tashtego there; this bird now chanced to intercept its broad fluttering wing between the hammer and the wood; and simultaneously feeling that ethereal thrill, the submerged savage beneath, in his death-gasp, kept his hammer frozen there; and so the bird of heaven with archangelic shrieks, and his imperial beak thrust upwards, and his whole captive form folded in the flag of Ahab, went down with his ship, which, like Satan, would not sink into hell till she had dragged a living part of heaven along with her, and helmeted herself with it.[2]

Rousseau was the last major thinker saved by theological-political (philosophic) cowardice from sinking into Ahab's hell. Illiberalism's hallmark is this cowardice, the faith in non- arbitrary goods (gods). Nietzsche knew that his nihilism provided no salvation from the hell of an empty privacy. He realized, as Rousseau did not, that that answer to Rousseau's question ("But I, detached from men and from everything, what am I?") is "nothing!" -- an answer anathema to the theological-political thought of which Rousseau was the last important representative.

R. Bart accurately interprets what Dante and the whole theological-political tradition meant by eternal damnation:

> There is a difference between even the worst of lives in this world and the sinners' existence in Hell. As they pass through the Gate of Hell, it commands: Abandon every Hope. In Hell, they are in utter hopelessness, something which is never the case in our life. Life without hope is unthinkable. Therefore the spirits in Hell are in a significant way different from us: they have died the death which is the death of the spirit. That is the Hell which is in their souls ... Hope is the hope of something good. It is an anticipation of good. It is based on some knowledge of good. If all knowledge of good has been extinguished in a soul, what hope remains! ... What the souls in Hell have lost is the power of the truth as a guide that will lead a man straight whatever his road ... They can see no good to hope for ... Let us watch them as they come before Minos, the judge. He asks no questions. Each sinner on his own acknowledges his sins. What makes it possible for him ... to know himself and confess his sins as never before? ...

> The sinner has nothing to hide, when he has lost all sense of the evil of sin; his truthfulness omits the central fact of all: that what he has done is wrong. At most he knows that other men do not approve. But without the light that gives goodness and truth to things, what has he to hide? In the dark all cats are grey. He can be honest as never before: in Hell, even the dissemblers tell the truth about themselves ... The enmity of Francesca to God leaves no hope for reconciliation, because she has no longer any notion that she might be wrong ... Above all it is Francesca's utter lack of regret for what she has been responsible for that shows ... the mark of the dead soul ... She is set in the state of her heart and mind ... For in us there resides conscience, and in her it is gone ... Conscience in us declares that there is a judgment not of our own making by which good and evil are distinguished. It is the reflection in us of the eternal and original light ... It is the knowledge that we are not alone but have our place with all men in an all-embracing vision ... it allows no ultimate privacy. It establishes an all-inclusive community ... In revealing their lack of conscience, the damned reveal that they are dead, dead to what gives us life and hope, the possibility of learning and love.[3]

Hopelessness, rejection of any non-arbitrary good (god), is responsible for the intellectual honesty experienced as eternal damnation by illiberalism -- and all desire is by "nature" illiberal. The force of desire's spirited attack on liberal reason (science) makes it almost impossible not to abandon intellectual honesty for some illiberalism or pseudo-liberalism: "to be intellectually responsible is not the easiest thing in the world."[4] As Stavrogin notes before his suicide: "On a log one may cross a river but not on a chip."[5] Illiberal faith in what Bart calls conscience provides a log, intellectual honesty only a chip.

That honesty's terrible price forced even a Rousseau to cling to a last, faded remnant of Socratic (theological-political) thought, his apotheosis of feeling (the sweetness of the feeling of existing) as against reason. To paraphrase Nietzsche on Christianity: this apotheosis is platonism for pseudo-liberals, the topsy-turvy platonism of Rousseau and his student, Nietzsche. This pseudo-liberal caricature of platonic (philosophic) illiberalism dominates most, if not all, contemporary academic life, not just Butterworth's Rousseau interpretation.

Chapter 15

The Specter at Liberalism's Feast: Walter Grammate's Great Dread and the Political Need for Suppression of the Arts and Sciences

To the memory of Walter Grammaté's fight with liberal education
(1897-1929)

> *Do you not see that we poets cannot be either wise or upright? ... Our masterful command of style is an insane lie; our honorable reputation a farce, the people's tolerance of us most ridiculous. To attempt to educate the people and the young through art is a dangerous gamble which should be forbidden. For how can anyone be an educator whose ineradicable and natural tendency is for the abyss ... for knowledge has no dignity or strength of purpose. It is knowledgeable, understanding, forgiving, without firmness or fixity. Knowledge sympathizes with the abyss; knowledge is the abyss.*
>
> -- *Mann, Death in Venice*

Walter Grammaté was a German expressionist artist in whom knowledge of reality inspired terror. This terror informs most of his art and much of what is called German expressionism. It is the response of man's moral-political passions, his herd-instinct, to science, genuine knowledge of reality. That response is seen in all its horror in Grammaté's etched self-portrait aptly called The Great Dread (*Die grosse Angst*).[1]

Walter Grammaté's Great Dread (1918)

Max Beckmann: Self Portrait (1922)

This dread may be avoided in two ways. One is to embrace the liberal propaganda sparking contemporary "liberation" movements. This propaganda trivializes the nihilist freedom secured by science into "exciting" and "stimulating" intellectual experiences designed to obfuscate that freedom's horror. The other alternative is severe political censorship of the arts and sciences. The first alternative is liberal democratic; the second, communist-nazi. The Weimar Republic and contemporary America tolerate, even encourage publicly, artists such as Grammaté; Lenin and Hitler do not. To grasp why nazi-communist repression is politically wiser, one must first see why science, knowledge of reality, is nihilist. Although nothing is easier to discern than science's nihilism, man's moral-political needs preclude this insight for most men, especially professional "scientists," those publicly recognized as "scientists." Genuine science never can receive public recognition; it has no redeeming social value. When the sciences and arts are seen for what they are, the need for harsh political supervision is obvious, at least to men who take their moral-political commitments seriously.

Since science (*scientia*) always has meant knowledge of reality, no real science is, at bottom, open-minded or skeptical in regard to the crucial question: what is reality? To be scientific means to have answered this most fundamental of all questions. It means to be under no illusions about the nature of man, god and the universe. I accept modern science's answer and reject that of ancient-medieval science. By modern science I mean the atheist-nihilist knowledge of reality, which emerged with Bacon and Descartes and received its perfection, if one may speak of perfection here, with Rousseau and Nietzsche.

To understand why modern science's "perfection" is a Rousseau and a Nietzsche, not a Newton or a Heisenberg, one must distinguish between scientific technology and experimentation and science, the knowledge of reality, legitimating them. This distinction was apparent to the most perceptive opponents of Bruno, Galileo and Spinoza. Their objections were chiefly against the atheist basis of scientific experimentation. This atheism made possible the existence of one science as opposed to the multitude of ancient-medieval sciences. Prior to the emergence of atheist science, there was no science as such. Instead there was aristotelian or epicurean or stoic or thomist science, etc. Each of these ancient-medieval sciences was sub-ordinated to some notion of man's highest good. The conflict between these sciences concerned the nature of that highest good. None of the conflicting camps denied, as modern nihilist science denies, that such an ultimate good (or god) ex-

ists. In this crucial sense, none of them was atheist as modern, nihilist science is.

Spinoza makes this atheism, the grounds for his excommunication, apparent in his condemnation of the Jewish orthodoxy which excommunicated him. He complains that orthodox theologians teach nothing

> but speculations of Platonists and Aristotelians to which they have made Holy Writ conform; not content to rave with the Greeks themselves, they want to make the prophets rave also ... by laying down beforehand as a foundation for the study and true interpretation of the Bible, the principle that it is in every passage true and divine.[2]

Spinoza knew that neither Plato nor Aristotle would have regarded every passage in any book, including the Bible as true and divine. His remark is meant in another sense for it condemns the anti-modern thrust of both ancient and medieval science. Medieval science claims to discern a god within or behind the Bible sanctifying it and lending it an authoritative meaning independent of any human interpretation. Similarly ancient science insisted that objects of perception and thought reflect, point to, or have within themselves an order, a nature, independent of their being apprehended. Plato, for example, claimed that the true good, the good by nature or the idea of the good, is opposed to or transcends the merely conventional goods of particular men and their communities. On Spinoza's horizon that ancient interpretation of nature is as unscientific as medieval faith in the Bible's truth. Ancient-medieval science, in all its conflicting forms, posits a natural or created order where, in reality, nothing exists but the illusions of that science:

> Those who do not understand the nature of things ... merely imagine it after a fashion, and mistake their imagination for understanding. Such persons firmly believe that there is an order in things, being really ignorant both of things and of their own nature ... as though there were any order in nature except in relation to our imagination. They say that god has created all things in order; thus without knowing it, attributing imagination to god ... there are men lunatic enough to believe that even god takes pleasure in harmony ... mistaking for things the forms of their imagination.[3]

As a modern scientist, Spinoza finds no intrinsic order or identity in anything, including god. Nothing exists apart from what it experiences or what is experienced about it. Traditional orthodoxy (whether Jewish, Christian, or Islamic) condemns Spinoza's science and its god as atheist rejection of control by any moral-political authority. Since all authority is moral-political, modern science recognizes no authority over its experimentation and technology. This scientific emancipation informs all modern thought and education, whether in the sciences or humanities. Liberal education liberates from respect for, or attachment to, authority in any form.

Sometimes I ask students (or faculty) whether there is anything science cannot or should not do ... for example, the human engineering in Auschwitz or the Gulag. Can or should genetic engineering or robotics turn men into robots or robots into men? Can it transform men into insects as in Kafka's Metamorphosis? Usually academics see nothing in principle to prevent this or any possible experimentation. Moral-political passions will be outraged, but has this outrage any significance, however strong it may appear, in a liberal world devoid of non-arbitrary moral-political standards? To be sure, technology may be unable to accomplish all its miracles by tomorrow or even in centuries. However, science recognizes no fixed natural or divine order preventing anything at any moment from being changed into -- or spontaneously changing into -- anything else or into nothing. Everything, including science itself, is an open field for radical experimentation and change. There are no non-arbitrary standards by which this limitless experimentation can be called true or false, progress or regress, good or evil. The utter arbitrariness of the nihilist reality revealed by science naturally outrages men serious about their moral-political commitments.

By science, I mean this modern, nihilist science, not ancient-medieval science whose claim to non-arbitrary standards of truth and falsity, progress and regress, good and evil is illusory. There is nothing complicated or sophisticated about science. To be scientific does not require years of intricate specialization in difficult mathematical-technological methods. Science is the simple, readily available insight that whatever is experienced -- a self, a world, a god, the law of contradiction, a morality or anything else -- is nothing more than the experience of it. It makes no difference whether the experience is that of an insect, a Darwin or a Lenin; it remains nothing more than the experience.

When students complain of identity crises, I tell them not to worry since neither they nor anything else has an identity about which to have crises. Of course, it is precisely awareness of this emptiness which

sparks their crises. Somehow they have divined the nothingness inherent in liberal education, thus prompting their crises of identity in a reality composed solely of nihilist experience. While such crises are just more empty experiences for modern science, they can be the beginning of a search for one's true identity in the world of ancient-medieval science.

Students wishing to make sense of their lives, a sense not subject to radical disruption at any moment, should seek the comforting illusions in an Aristotle, a Lucretius or an Aquinas not the scientific realism of a Descartes, a Nietzsche or Mann's Death in Venice. Those illusions, the heart of ancient-medieval thought and life, provide men with permanent identities or essences, regardless of what is experienced about them or what they experience about themselves.

When I refer to science (without quotation marks) in the rest of this paper, I mean modern science. It is unscientific illusion to believe that any thoughts or words, any scientific or unscientific theories or beliefs, are more than empty experiences, impressions as Hume called them. The planned transformation or creation of anything is called technology in the sciences and creativity in the arts or humanities. A better term would be sorcery or magic since both scientific technology and artistic creativity encourage the illusion that something exists or can be brought into existence, when in reality, only the nothingness of empty experience exists or can exist.

In one of the most scientific books ever written, The Reveries of the Solitary Walker, Rousseau called these nothings reveries. He meant that reality provides no grounds for a non-arbitrary distinction between (private) dreams or phantasmagoria and the public or political state of wakefulness. Since science is nihilist, the expression "nihilist science" is as tautological as "scientific reveries."

Rousseau's realization that science's reality is nothing but nihilist reveries, magical conjurings, made him, rather than a Newton or an Einstein, the "perfection" of scientific understanding. Of course, one cannot speak of perfection or degradation, progress, or regress in relation to science. In a reality of phantasmagoria, there is at bottom nothing to say and nobody to say it, nothing to teach and nobody to learn. Hence no meaningful community or communication can exist. The closest approximation to an honest expression of science would be silence or incoherent noise. The intellectual honesty to acknowledge that this void is everything is prevented by the herd-instinct's desperate need to be political, to have a genuine identity as part of a genuine community in which meaningful communication occurs. This desperation usu-

ally shames or intimidates intellectual honesty, which rarely exists in any case, into silence.

Intellectual candor acknowledges that scientific wisdom always is empty, low, trivial. There is nothing edifying or "consciousness-raising" about genuine knowledge of oneself or of anything else in the universe. It is so utterly devoid of sense and meaning that one's herd instinct, one's decent respect for man's moral-political illusions, makes expression of real knowledge manifestly ridiculous or shameful. Nietzsche rightly noted the need for the rarest form of courage here: "The highest courage of the knower shows itself not where he inspires wonder and terror -- but where he must be experienced by the non-knower as superficial, low, cowardly and trivial."[4] This courage, which Nietzsche called the conscience of science, informs Grammaté's Great Dread.

Nietzsche's life was an unending struggle to maintain intellectual integrity, that is, not to yield to the powerful temptation to make science and liberal education appear to be more than much ado about nothing. That temptation continually made him yearn to deny the worthlessness of his (or anyone else's) quest to know reality for what it unfortunately is. His continual battle against this pious seduction bears witness to a fantastic probity:

> My 'philosophy,' if I have the right to call that which oppresses me to the very roots of my being so, is no longer communicable ... I hold before myself the picture of Dante and Spinoza who better understood how to bear the lot of solitude. Of course, their way of thinking, contrasted with mine, was one which made solitude bearable, and finally, for all those who had a 'god' for company there did not yet really exist what I know as 'solitude'. For me, my life now consists in the wish that all things might be otherwise than as I conceive them; and that someone might make my 'truths' unworthy of belief for me.[5]

Nietzsche's desperate, ultimately unsuccessful fight for intellectual honesty was rare, probably unique. The usual response is domestication of science and liberal education, their transformation into propaganda designed to make them appear civilized or civilizable. Denuded of this pious propaganda, science is neither communicable nor communal. A completely scientific expression would be nothing communicating nothing! Anything more is propaganda, however sophisticated its tech-

nology. Under the spell of this propaganda, those introducing the sciences, natural or social, into human life and education usually fail to comprehend the Hell which they are creating.

In reality advocates of genuinely liberal education encourage their students to be, and to do, nothing. Their herd-instinct need for public recognition of their "sciences" blinds them to their nihilist core. They yearn to combine the uncombinable, science's nihilism with ancient-medieval "science's" illusory world of meaningful communication and community.

The herd instinct's need to communicate, to learn and teach meaningfully demands some form of ancient-medieval thought as education's core. Its core curriculum is the great books of ancient-medieval illusion. In that world of fixed, permanent limits to experience and experimentation, there is no place for the unlimited technology and creativity of human or genetic engineering, nuclear technology or robotics. Although such sciences, as currently perceived, are little more than propaganda to obtain official recognition, their core, the core of all genuine science is realization of reality's nothingness.

This realization is far more scientific than the usual, vain efforts to make something out of nothing, to conjure up for oneself and one's public the comfortable delusion that any activity, scientific or otherwise, is worthwhile. Among contemporary American professors, the delusion usually embraced is some liberal-marxist cause dedicated to liberating nuclear freezers, ethnics, feminists, sodomites, etc. In his Nigger of the Narcissus, Conrad immortalized the usual product of their pedagogy in the man most unlike Singleton, Donkin, whose liberated envy and spite spark his perpetual protests against infringement of his freedom and "rights." So long as the nihilist implications of this freedom is not grasped pseudo-liberal propaganda mesmerizes the faithful into seeing nihilism, the absence of non-arbitrary moral-political authority, as an invitation to ever greater intellectual "excitement" and "stimulation."

To succumb to this propaganda is beneath contempt. In science's nihilist world, no experience or experiment, however "stimulating," has any substance or integrity. Consequently academic pseudo-liberal "consciousness-raising" is no more just or honest than the racist, sexist or chauvinist variety. Nor does one's willingness to die for one's moral-political commitments make it (or those cherishing it) more than nothing.

Most men are morally committed and, therefore, hate nothing more than genuinely scientific or liberal education. The hallmark of

moral-political authority in all its forms is the determination to manufacture an illusory haven from science's nihilism. The more science's real meaning emerges, the more desperate the moral-political determination to destroy it becomes, finally informing all serious aspects of human life. Insofar as anything is taken seriously, it becomes political or moral and therefore hostile to science. This hostility has been the ancient-medieval core of aversion to real science since the persecution of Bruno, Galileo and Spinoza.

Science's complete lack of moral-political import makes it impossible to think or write seriously about it. Its lack of intrinsic intelligibility cannot be articulated meaningfully. The simple insight at science's heart, cannot be stated without at the same time stating its denial. For if one says that nothing exists but nihilist experience, then of course, this statement too is another nihilist experience. Yet it articulates a nihilist experience which claims to know the ultimate truth about everything. As such it is a particular nihilist experience here and now which grasps the universal truth about all things. How can an empty, particular experience grasp universal truth? Does not this question and indeed all attempts at genuine communication, including the present paper, presuppose the existence of a self capable of communicating with other selves in a common-sense world shared by it and them? Such arguments are decisive only to minds deluded by ancient-medieval "science."

The great conflict between ancient and medieval "science" was whether that common sense world and its natural order was eternal (Aristotle) or created by a god who revealed himself in the Bible (Aquinas). This conflict between a "science" believing in this god and his revelation and unbelieving science has no place in genuine science. It makes no difference whether the common sense (illiberal) order of the world, here taken for granted, is guaranteed by a creator god or an eternal nature. In either case the attempt is made to account for a common sense world which in reality is nothing but nihilist (liberal) experience. There is neither need for, nor possibility of, accounting for anything, if only the nothingness of empty experience exists. In this crucial sense, what Leo Strauss says of traditional Jewish orthodoxy is true of all ancient-medieval "science":

> The final result (of modern scientific enlightenment) is that unbelieving science and faith no longer, as in the middle ages, have a common basis of natural, common-sense knowledge, on which basis a meaningful conflict between faith and unbe-

> lief is possible. On the contrary every possibility of understanding even the possibility of a conflict between them is on the verge of disappearing. In the world created by scientific enlightenment and its heirs, in the world of 'modern culture;' Jewish orthodoxy really has no part. If that orthodoxy remains true to itself, it lacks any entrance to that world. It survived the nineteenth century as a scientifically incomprehensible remnant of a forgotten past, more an object of contempt than of curiosity.[6]

Reason, as common sense and therefore most men understand reason, finds the heart of liberal education in the conflict between reason and revelation as the conflicting ways of accounting for a common sense world shared by both camps in the conflict. Those pseudo-liberal educators whose faith in science prompts denial of that conflict's educational priority rarely realize the nihilism, and in particular the moral void which this denial introduces into students and teachers. It is the deepest root of education's contemporary emptiness which experiences the conflict of reason and revelation as, at best, a venerable cultural monument of the history of ideas or perhaps an exciting exercise in eristic skills. For science's nihilist reason, this conflict is meaningless because the common sense world (about whose true cause it debated), is as empty of non-arbitrary meaning as anything else. It is this nihilism (liberalism) which is responsible for the hatred inspired by genuine science (liberalism) in most, if not all, men.

At its most perceptive, art can do what is impossible for men whose moral-political passions spark abhorrence of science. It can both acknowledge the truth of science (which that hatred prevents) but, at the same time, it can do justice to that hatred of liberalism. Since this kind of art realizes that science's nihilism is the truth about all things it does not share the moral-political man's hatred of it as a vicious, godless lie. For it, science is an object of terror rather than hatred.

Moved by its dread of truth, this art presents life's deepest conflict as accurately as possible. This conflict, which replaces the unscientific one of reason and revelation, is between men who want desperately to be serious, that is political, about their lives and the always unwelcome realization that nothing serious exists in their selves or anywhere else. Nothing shows this most repellent of discoveries more realistically than much of German expressionist art, especially works such as Grammaté's Great Dread and Max Beckmann's woodcut self-portrait of 1922. In general the most revealing works are stark black and white ex-

pressionist graphics (woodcuts, etchings, lithographs, particularly self-portraits). Color's richness is more tied to the herd instinct's common sense, political world than those bleak, startling graphics are. There is nothing colorful, pleasing to the eye or mind, in the revelations of genuine science as distinct from the usual scientific propaganda. Intellectual honesty always is terrifying.

The uncompromising harshness of the confrontation between seriousness (the herd instinct) and science is caught, in all its horror, in The Great Dread and in the Beckmann self portrait. It is accurately called The Great Dread since it makes manifest life's greatest horror, the result of a genuinely liberal education. Grammaté's eyes stare in terror at what his hand tries hopelessly to fend off, the nothingness of his own life and of life as such. The same shock and repugnance animates the Beckmann self-portrait, but here there is a determination to face reality's nothingness. This determination is not deluded by the faith that anything in oneself or the world supports it. The determination is no more than another hole in the universal void. Nevertheless the self-portrait's firm resolution to face life's nothingness easily can convey the impression that it somehow manages to transcend that nothingness:

> I still hold my head high like a drowning man -- yet sooner or later the black waves of nothingness must crash together over me ... well, I am prepared to become a nothing again in spite of the great pains I have taken to become a self (*Ich*)[7]

This stark resolve is deceptive insofar as Beckmann is not deluded by any faith that life's nihilism can be overcome. He is closer to the nihilist devaluation of all human striving so repugnant to Nietzsche, Marx and their disciples. The woodcut's resoluteness is inseparable from the awareness that it too is as meaningless as everything else in life: "Nauseating and amusing life. A chaos of weakness and exultant, useless strength."[8]

Grammaté's rare intellectual honesty precluded blinding himself to the worthlessness of truth and the search for truth. His Great Dread lacks even Beckmann's nihilist will to become a self. The contours of the face are far more fragile than Beckmann's, reflecting helpless terror at being engulfed by those "black waves of nothingness." The Great Dread means that nothing can be willed or done to domesticate or civilize that void since it is all there is or can be. It is a confrontation with one's death, one's nothingness, as the only authentic way of life in a ni-

hilist world. It shows death not as something fearful in the future, something to be avoided or postponed by piety or by medical technology, but as life's nihilist essence now and always. The Great Dread brings this home more effectively than the sections in Heidegger's Being and Time devoted to living in the awareness of one's death or Tolstoy's Death of Ivan Illytch, cited there by Heidegger. [9] The *memento mori* of The Great Dread, is not "Remember that you will die!" but "Remember that you are dead!" or "Remember that you are death!"

In The Great Dread there is no delight with one's freedom, no "stimulating" self-expression, no "consciousness-raising" about this self knowledge. Grammaté is too scientific, in the true sense of that much misused word, to mistake science's always unwelcome core for the "exciting" wizardry of its propaganda. Like any man with genuine self-knowledge, Grammaté cannot be comforted:

> Those who truly have looked into the heart *(Wesen)* of things ... they are the knowers ... Knowledge kills action, action needs the veil of illusion. True knowledge, insight into the horrible truth, outweighs any motive for action ... we all fear the truth.[10]

Grammaté's Great Dread shows that intellectual honesty means realization that life is death because existence is nothing.

The Great Dread points to the absolute meaninglessness of the herd instinct's faith in a universe hospitable to selves and their moral-political limits. The more this central insight surfaces, the more moral or political striving depends upon fanatical determination to hide the truth from oneself. The propaganda inevitably arising from this fanaticism is the harshest enemy of intellectual honesty. However, it is crucial to see that this propaganda is the final refuge of all seriousness, all moral-political life.

The less scientific enlightenment is prevented by moral-political propaganda, the more citizens divine how illusory citizenship in their community or any community is. Only propaganda and/or terror holds communities together. Thus the relative tolerance of liberal democratic regimes becomes repressive communist or nazi brutality, the more citizens are permitted to confront their nihilism as Grammaté's Great Dread does. Then art which depicts that confrontation will be destroyed and its creators murdered.

The eradication of such art by nazi-communist censorship reveals an awareness of its repellent truth lacking in liberal democratic toler-

ance or encouragement. That encouragement springs from a liberal propaganda vainly bent upon domesticating even the scientific self-knowledge of a Grammaté or a Beckmann. This propaganda's spell apparently is irresistible to pseudo-liberal tastes, blinding them to the fact that their pluralism, if seen for what it is, means the death of all politics, including their own. Leo Strauss, the chief contemporary defender of ancient-medieval illusions, rightly remarked that contemporary liberal intellectuals fiddle while Rome burns, without realizing either that they fiddle or that Rome burns.[11] Strauss made this comment about those intellectuals mindlessly determined to make liberal education (in particular, the study of politics) amoral and nihilist by informing it with modern, rather than ancient-medieval, science. Drugged by liberal propaganda into unawareness of what they really are doing, they trivialize serious education into nihilist fiddling.

In science's nihilist reality, not fiddling means fanatic nazi-communist determination to delude oneself. Nothing sabotages this determination more than The Great Dread's message of doom. Communist-nazi rage destroys such works and their creators, wherever it can. Absence of this rage in liberal intellectuals springs from inability to divine liberal education's real meaning. This liberal blindness is bolstered by faith in the "exciting" and "stimulating" lie that life is enriched by open-ended tolerance for all human creativity, including that of a Grammaté. Both communists and nazis strive harder to blind themselves to genuine science, the more they divine the futility of this striving. Too intelligent to embrace liberalism's propaganda, they rely solely on their fanaticism to hide science's nihilism from themselves. Thus Rudolph Hess originally created the myth of Hitler's infallibility, although aware of its untruth. The communist version of this fanaticism is caught in Bukharin's last words (in Stalin's 1938 purge trial) to the court condemning him to death. Under pressure from the communist party (ruled by Stalin), Bukharin, one of the original leaders, had confessed to crimes of which both he and his judges knew him to be innocent. His final words reveal the great dread responsible for his willingness to do whatever the Party required.[12]

The intentional self-delusion of both Hess and Bukharin was sparked by the fanatic resolve to shield themselves from the "absolutely black vacuity" of their lives and of life as such. This fanaticism is necessary if there is to be anything seriously moral-political in science's nihilism. Carl Schmitt rightly noted that liberal democracy's blindness to this necessity strives, consciously or unconsciously, to eliminate all seriousness.[13] For life's most serious fight occurs when the basis of all

seriousness, the moral-political passions, are faced with science, the realization of their own nothingness. Liberal pluralism's tolerance for all points of view interprets even that agonizing confrontation as another of its "stimulating" viewpoints. What a victory for science's nihilism in whose void nothing exists, but empty viewpoints or methods of experience! In that "absolutely black vacuity" everything can be only points of view, methods or ways of viewing or experiencing. Liberal democratic educators are enchanted by the intellectual "entertainment" provided by this "stimulating" playpen of ideas.[14] Only those duped by science's propaganda experience any qualitative difference among any of democratic liberalism's countless points of view or "self-expressions", its "scientific" or unscientific methods.

In their efforts to interpret science's nihilism as just another exciting viewpoint, liberal democratic intellectuals rarely perceive that nihilism's horror is precisely its scientific certainty that life is no more than this "absolutely black vacuity" of empty points of view so abhorrent to a Bukharin or a Hess. It is intellectual dishonesty to believe that liberal tolerance of all viewpoints, especially morally dangerous ones, is more fair or honest than communist-nazi repression. This repression springs from realization that faith in any standard of fairness (or of anything else) must first be created. Its creation necessarily involves fanatic determination to blind oneself to the unavailability of non-arbitrary standards. This fanaticism, the heart of any morality, informs Hess and Bukharin, not their pseudo-liberal foes. The more the moral need for this fanaticism is realized, the more desperate the resolve to eradicate liberal pluralism becomes.

This desperation is the link between The Great Dread and its nazi-communist persecutors. Their persecution takes nihilism's threat seriously, while liberal toleration, without realizing it, is as devoid of seriousness as nihilism itself. Liberalism's "absolutely black vacuity" is nowhere more evident than in its effort to discredit the fanaticism of a Hess or a Bukharin. It accuses them of lacking the intellectual stamina to subject their cherished moral-political faith to free and open discussion. For liberalism's faith is that out of its perpetual discussion and dialogue, truth finally will emerge. This faith informs the propaganda of most schools in liberal democracies. It is crucial to see that this faith in dialogue, Socratic or otherwise, is nourished by the moral-political delusions shaping ancient-medieval "science:"

> It is of the essence of liberalism to avoid coming to fighting decisions but to attempt instead to turn the occasion for such

> decisions into free and open discussions. The bourgeoisie may be defined as a class devoted to discussion ... This condemns it, for it wishes to escape making harsh decisions. A class which transforms all political activity into the chatter of the press and of parliament cannot compete in an age of social upheaval ... Its religion lies in freedom of speech and of the press ... Its ideal of political life consists in making not only the legislative body but the whole populace into a gigantic debating club. And the truth is supposed to emerge in this way through voting ... Liberalism's essence is 'wheeling and dealing,' patient halfheartedness, with the hope that the decisive confrontation, the bloody fight to the finish, can be transformed into a parliamentary debate and will permit itself to be suspended through eternal discussion ... the heart of the political idea, the demanding moral decision, is thus avoided ... dictatorship is the opposite of discussion.[15]

Hess and Bukharin reject the liberal temptation to avoid life and death political decisions. They despise such temptations as liberal fiddling while Rome burns. Here "Rome" means fanatic resolve to be political in a nihilist world. Too horrified at reality's "absolutely black vacuity" to fiddle, Bukharin and Hess are outraged by liberalism's easy-going faith in the redemptive virtues of pluralism and open dialogue. Their outrage is sparked by the terror animating The Great Dread and similar art. In this crucial respect, such art has far more in common with its communist-nazi persecutors than with its liberal benefactors.[16] Only their comforting stupidity prevents liberals from seeking to murder artists responsible for art which unmasks the nihilist consequences of liberal education.

Because Beckmann was too scientific for faith in liberal propaganda's redemptive virtues, he divined the link between his art and the nazis who branded it as degenerate. Upon learning of American liberalism's 1945 defeat of nazi Germany, Beckmann noted: "Yes, Yes – I know that the end has come for me and for Germany. What difference does it make ... always the same old siren-song."[17]

Chapter 16

Politics Or Nothing!
Nazism's Origin in Scientific Contempt for Politics

My teaching is mild against those without faith in it; it has no hell or threats. Those without faith are left with an empty, flighty life in their own consciousness.
-- Nietzsche

Churchill in 1940 feared that nazi victory would mean that

> The whole world ... including all that we have known and cared for; will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of perverted science.[1]

Here Churchill really meant philosophy, not science. Science, unlike philosophy, cannot be perverted. The following statement by Churchill's enemy, Himmler, is closer to the heart of science:

> If the state or party declared that a certain view must be regarded as the desired starting point of scientific research, that view must be accepted as a scientific axiom and there must be no shilly-shallying about it ... Science proceeds from hypotheses that change every year or two. So there is no earthly reason why the party should not lay down a particular hypothesis as a starting point, even if it runs counter to current scientific opinion ... The one and only thing that matters to us ... is to have ideas that strengthen our people in their national pride.[2]

Himmler's brand of political liberalism (pseudo-science) means that any faith, no matter how exotic, can become the hypothesis to be scientifically tested. He believed that it proved itself scientifically by destroying competing hypotheses or "ideologies." Here he is mistaken. The same reason responsible for Churchill's false belief in a science capable of being perverted is responsible for Himmler's claim that his hypothesis (or any opinion about anything) can prove itself scientifically valid. Similarly Marx believed his concept of historical inevitability was scientifically verifiable and Hitler demanded biological proof of his racial theories. Heisenberg summed up this pseudo-science in his view that science springs from arbitrary faith to prove which the scientist is prepared to risk his life.[3] Real scientific proof occurs, according to Himmler and Heisenberg, in this always hazardous way.

In the 1953 publication of lectures given in 1935, Heidegger, who probably regarded himself as the only Nazi, attacked pseudo-nazis in the name of nazism:

> The works offered everywhere today as the philosophy of national socialism actually have nothing to do with the inner truth and greatness of this movement (namely the meeting of global technology and modern man). They have been written by men fishing in the murky waters of values and universals (or wholes).[4]

I suggest the following interpretation of Heidegger's nazism.

Only real nazism is sufficiently courageous to incorporate the apolitical or anti-political thrust of science or global technology. As such it has nothing but contempt for all values (any notion of good and bad, right and wrong, true and false) or wholes or universals (anything political, anything common or communicable). Since politics always is concerned with such things, true nazis are radically apolitical. In its contempt for politics, nazism is one with science which emerges when anyone from cavemen to contemporaries declares his independence from philosophy.

Prior to this declaration of independence, there is no science as such. Instead there is aristotelian, epicurean, stoic, thomist, newtonian, einsteinian, christian science, etc. Each of these pseudo-sciences is subordinated to some more or less clearly articulated philosophic (or theological) theory about the universe. Each subordinates science's radically private, incommunicable core to a hypothesis or theory, a philosophic effort to communicate something common to the whole universe.

The reason for scientific rejection of philosophic or theological supervision is made clear in Spinoza's condemnation of theologians who teach nothing

> but speculations of Platonists and Aristotelians to which they have made Holy Writ conform; not content to rave with the Greeks themselves, they want to make the prophets rave also ... by laying down beforehand as a foundation for the study and true interpretation of the Scripture, the principle that it is in every passage true and divine.[5]

Spinoza knew that neither Plato nor Aristotle regarded every passage in any book, including the Bible, as true and divine. His remark is meant rather to condemn the political and therefore unscientific thrust of both Greek philosophy and medieval theology. Both that philosophy and theology claim to discern in things a divine or natural identity or being independent of experience or will: things retain their permanent identity or wholeness no matter what anyone experiences about them or what they experience about themselves.

Contrary to this philosophic view, science is the simple realization that whatever is experienced -- a self, a world, the law of contradiction, a god or anything else -- is nothing apart from its being experienced. When students complain of "identity crises," I tell them not to worry, since neither they nor anyone else has an identity about which to have a crisis! For science, genuine knowledge of reality, reveals a world of nothing but empty experiences, impressions as Hume called them.

Unaware that science reveals a nihilist world, pseudo- scientists, like Himmler or Heisenberg, strive to prove their faith or hypotheses scientifically. By this proof they seek its legitimation, its political acceptability in regimes whose propaganda, that is, education makes the "educated" respect this legitimation. Their respect springs from their education's obfuscation of a scientific nihilism for which all their goals -- whether democratic, communist, nazi or anything else -- are empty reveries.

This obfuscation encourages them to believe that science or technology are merely means to implement their favorite moral- political goals. In reality these means reveal the nothingness of their goals. That is all science ever proves or can prove in its nihilist world. Futile efforts to do more, to support one's cherished moral-political cause with scientific proof, mistake science's propaganda, its bid for moral-political respectability, for its nihilist core. Misunderstood as mere means,

science or technology really is a Trojan Horse, a Sorcerer's Apprentice, which negates the ends it supposedly serves!

Except for realization of life's nihilism, no scientific proofs or discoveries exist. This simple, unsophisticated realization -- and it alone -- is science! No other truth is provable or discoverable in a universe where nothing prevents anything from changing into anything else or into the nothingness which everything always is. For example, there would be no real change if, as in Kafka's Metamorphosis, men became insects.

In reality, neither men nor insects nor anything else is anything but empty experiences or reveries. Only deluded fools "fishing in the murky waters of values and wholes or universals (*Ganzheiten*)" discern integrity or wholeness where actually there is nothing. Their error blurs "the inner truth and greatness of national socialism," the effort to incorporate into one's life the nihilism at the core of science or global technology:

> Compared to the importance of this battle everything else is of no concern: the final question about the conditions of life is raised here and the first attempt is made here to answer this question experimentally. To what extent can truth endure incarnation? -- that is the question, that is the experiment.[6]

Can men grasp life's nothingness without destroying themselves?: "We are making an experiment with the truth. Perhaps mankind will be destroyed by it! Fine!"[7] Mankind's destruction or the destruction of all life would change nothing in a nihilist reality. Nietzsche's experiment with the truth is the same as Heidegger's inner truth and greatness of nazism. That experiment means to determine whether a few supermen can become alive to the truth without self-destruction. It does not mean to prove the truth experimentally. Nothing -- and only nothing! -- can be proven in science's nihilist reality.

Unlike Nietzsche, the unscientific cling to their faith that their arbitrary hypotheses or ideologies can somehow be validated in practice. Both half-hearted nazis and communists are characterized by desperate determination to make their empty reveries seem more than merely private experiences. Thus Rudolph Hess whose suicide in Spandau sealed his fanatic loyalty to Hitler as the greatest leader of all time originally created the apotheosis of his *Führer*. As aware of Hitler's deficiencies as any intelligent British subject is of those of his queen, Hess never-

theless insisted that life is meaningless unless men create, as it were *ex nihilo*, the infallible tyrant to be revered by them.

Deprived by nihilist science of the possibility of appealing to something akin to the divine right of kings, Hess had to create his version of divine right by force of will alone. The alternative in a nihilist world is anarchy and chaos.

Pseudo-nazis such as Hess, whose fanaticism was sparked by fear of reality's nihilism, prefer their communist counterparts to democratic liberals or traditional conservatives. Both share the desperate need to create political life *ex nihilo*, since no divine or natural justification for politics exists. Both rebel against the nothingness which genuine science finds at life's core. Both flee to forms of humanist creativity or scientific technology, futile efforts to appease their political passions by creating something commanding moral-political respectability in their communities. Technology's "wonders" give science a patina of redeeming social value, a politically effective propaganda in contemporary regimes. Hess' form of this propaganda is fired by the determination to force life's nothingness to be something -- to be political -- or to destroy the world in this futile effort!

The communist version of this fanatic futility is caught by Whittaker Chamber's description of Bukharin's last words (in Stalin's 1938 purge trial) to the court condemning him to death. The only thing Chambers admired in Bukharin was this final apology:

> I do not understand how men, knowing that another man spoke these words at such a moment, can read them and fail to be rent apart by their meaning ... I would print them bold and hang them at the front of college classrooms ... Bukharin, it must be remembered is literally innocent ... It is his uncommitted crime that he pleads guilty to. He said: 'I shall now speak of myself, of the reasons for my repentance ... For when you ask yourself: 'If you must die, what are you dying for?' – an absolutely black vacuity suddenly rises before you with startling vividness. There was nothing to die for if one wanted to die unrepentant ... This, in the end, disarmed me completely and led me to bend my knees before the party and the country. And when you ask yourself: 'Very well, suppose you do not die; suppose by some miracle you remain alive, again for what? Isolated from everybody, an enemy of the people, in an inhuman position, completely isolated from everything that constitutes the essence of life.' And at such mo-

> ments, Citizen Judges, everything personal, all personal encrustation, all rancor, pride and a number of other things fall away, disappear ...

Chambers comments: "Is there not a stillness in the room where you read this? That is the passing of the wings of tragedy."[8]

Bukharin's political needs, fanaticized by his awareness of reality's nihilism, prevented him from confronting his judges as Jesus or Socrates had. The same is true of Hess' willed dependence on Hitler, a desperate loyalty unto death. Hess' and Bukharin's realization of reality's "black vacuity" makes it impossible for them to be Socratic or Christian gadflies, bearing witness to a truth, or search for truth, able to save men. Their only salvation is desperate willing of it *ex nihilo*.

It is precisely this fanatic *ex nihilo* willing which obfuscates what Heidegger called "the inner truth and greatness of national socialism ... by fishing in the murky waters of values and universals." Nazis strive to incorporate their nihilism, as Nietzsche did, not to will its obfuscation as Hess and Bukharin did:

> The spirit of national socialism was not so much concerned with the national and the social but much more with that radically private resoluteness which rejects any discussion or mutual understanding because it relies wholly and only on itself ... At bottom all its concepts and words are the expression of the bitter and hard resoluteness of a will asserting itself in the face of its own nothingness, a will proud of its loathing for happiness, reason and compassion.[9]

That <u>all</u> nazism's concepts and thoughts express <u>only</u> this "bitter and hard" will cannot be emphasized too strongly. They do not express things or truths existing apart from that resoluteness. Nothing -- and only nothing -- exists in nazism's scientific reality. Nazism's will asserts itself in the face of its own nothingness.

Chambers wrongly saw tragedy in this nihilist willing. Neither Hess or Bukharin nor Nietzsche or Heidegger are tragic. The tragic fate or family curse of an Agamemnon or an Oedipus was radically political -- as everything serious in life is. Oedipus and Agamemnon were serious men and therefore open to tragedy precisely because they experienced themselves as pious kings and fathers, the chief defenders of their sacred cities and families. Had they perceived themselves, as Nietzsche and Hess did, as nihilist individuals free to will anything, there would

be no tragedy: anything could be freely willed or unwilled at any time. Nothing is serious that cannot be ridiculous if one wills it to be so. Precisely this nihilist, and therefore apolitical or comic, resoluteness constitutes the inner truth and greatness of national socialism. Nihilist scientists are the only nazis!

Politics always is serious and potentially, if not actually, tragic. The main political passion, moral indignation, the hatred of enemies and craving for vengeance against them, springs from the political faith that one has or needs common goods without which life is not worth living. Hatred and desire for revenge is the natural reaction against enemies, those threatening one's common or political good. Consider Psalm 137.

That hatred and vengeance, the heart of politics, makes no sense in nazis who share the apolitical bent which the political theologian, Carl Schmitt, condemned in the political romantic:

> Neither logical distinctions nor moral value judgments, nor political decisions are possible for him. The chief source of political vitality, faith in justice and indignation against injustice do not exist for him ... He lacks the feeling for the justice of his own cause as well as every social self-feeling ... In his world all political or religious differences dissolve into interesting ambiguities ... Here everything is interchangeable with everything else.[10]

Nietzsche demanded a superman capable of destroying "the chief source of political vitality, faith in justice and indignation against injustice." He placed the responsibility for that faith and indignation in the spirit of revenge:

> That man be saved from the desire for revenge: that is for me the bridge to the highest hope ... The spirit of revenge that has been till now man's best reflection ... Everywhere where responsibility or reasons were sought it was the spirit of revenge doing the seeking. Over millennia this spirit of revenge has achieved such a mastery over mankind that all metaphysics, psychology, conceptions of history but above all morality is stigmatized with it. As far as man has thought he has dragged the bacillus of revenge into things ... We others who wish to win back for becoming its innocence wish to be the missionaries of a purer thought: that nothing has given

> man his qualities, neither god, nor society, nor his parents and ancestors, nor he himself -- that nothing is responsible for him. There is no being (*Wesen*) that could be made responsible for anyone's existing or being the way he is ... There is no purpose, no sense for our being ... This is the great solace, in this lies the innocence of all existence.[11]

A world purged of moral indignation and responsibility, science's nihilist reality, makes impossible non-arbitrary goods or evils, friends or enemies. To have such goods in that world and to have enemies against which to defend them, one must will them out of reality's nothingness. This desperate willfulness is the fanatic determination to do the impossible, to break out of the empty privacy which is nazism's inner truth and greatness.

In any human or bestial herd, the main concern of herd members always is to get or to preserve what is good for themselves. The "themselves" here are not experienced as isolated, nihilist individuals who are nothing more than a chaos of arbitrary sentiments or experiences. The herd member's self-knowledge is political. It is of himself as a father and citizen, a member of his herd. Thus obtaining or preserving what is good for himself is interpreted in terms of communal or political, not private, goods. No real privacy is available to, or desired by, herd members; everything crucial in their lives is political.

Philosophy, as distinct from science, is the political effort to think through, to seriously question, the common goods responsible for rootedness in one's herd. It is this rootedness' compulsion which makes herd members believe that they have selves and inhabit a world which exists as more than empty reveries. In that political world, the main concern of all bestial or human herd members is obtaining and defending their common or political good.

Unlike unphilosophic herd members, philosophers, that is, philosophic herd members do not unquestioningly accept what their herd believes to be right and good. They transform their herd's main concern, to live the good or pious life, into a question. They doubt their herd's claim to answer this question, to know what is good for its members. However, in the decisive respect, philosophic herd members sided with their unphilosophic brethren by embracing the illusion that their political good exists as something more than nihilist reveries. Like all herd members, philosophers are shaped by what Nietzsche called the spirit of revenge.

Unlike scientists knowledgeable about reality's nihilism, philosophers never doubt the existence of a true moral-political good for their herd, however difficult or even impossible it may be to adequately ascertain this good. Since they obtain this fundamental certainty not by self-evident insight but by a political faith shared by all herd members, they remain philosophers, seekers after wisdom or knowledge. As such, they claim to know that their political good is the highest object of knowledge, although they do not know it adequately. In Socrates' words, they know what they do not know. In any case, the illusion created by their herd membership precludes scientific realization of reality's nihilism. They remain philosophers, not scientists; political men not nihilists.

When Churchill spoke of perverted science, he meant philosophy, not science which is nihilist and therefore incapable of being perverted or improved. How can a reality consisting of nothing but empty reveries suffer improvement or perversion? There is neither scientific progress nor regress. What passes for scientific or technological progress is nothing but window-dressing, propaganda to make science's nihilism palatable in the illusory realm created by political faith.

That faith compels a Hess or a Bukharin (and all political men) to fear the privacy of nihilism's apolitical world. They are repelled by the radical isolation caused by Nietzsche's experimental efforts to realize truth's nihilism. Yet that solitude's silence or unintelligible, merely private noises is more scientific than any so-called scientific theory or hypothesis.

This liberal silence or privacy obviously is easier for an artist to reveal than for a philosopher whose illiberal orientation it disrupts. This is especially true of the graphic work (the stark black and white woodcuts, etchings and lithographs) of Max Beckmann or Walter Grammaté, the stickmen or greymen of George Grosz.[12] The most perceptive artists, especially those among the German expressionists, catch, insofar as it is catchable, the artist's confrontation with the emptiness of his self and of reality as such. This encounter is best seen in the harsh, graphic self-portraits of Beckmann and Grammaté. Hess and Bukharin's desperate fear and hatred of this nothingness is "beautifully" shown in Grosz's *Ecce Homo*.

Artists such as Beckmann, Grammaté and Grosz are more scientific (liberal) than Aristotle, Newton or Einstein who mean to present communicable theories or hypotheses. Their artistic insight into life's nihilism precludes anything really common or communicable. What is communicable is the horror of the confrontation with nihilism depicted

in their art. They realize that they themselves and the world in which they live is nothing but nihilist experiences. Their political passions are nauseated by this realization. Their art, especially the self-portraits mentioned above, is the bitter confrontation of those passions with their own nothingness. At their best, they simply show the confrontation stark and unembellished. Encouraging no nihilist drives to overcome nihilism, they leave artist and observer, insofar as he has eyes to see, with nothing. They are far too scientific to cater to the usual pseudo-scientific expectations responsible for a communicable, politically comprehensible "science."

In this they antagonize not only pseudo-scientists and other political men whose terror at genuine science's nihilism demands faith in a world in which theories can be tested or communicated, in which scientists (and others) can work with each other and for each other. They also differ from humanist artists and intellectuals who, while agreeing that the external world is empty, nevertheless find a wealth of meaning in their own inner life. These are the apostles of self-expression, "finding one's real self." Thus so-called non-objective or abstract art often denies the meaningfulness of objects, of the external world, while affirming the richness of inner experience. At their most scientific, Beckmann or Grammaté, unlike Klee or Kandinsky, realize that their inner selves are as devoid of substance or meaning as the external world. No inner integrity or complexity exists in reality's nihilism. Only men alive to life's total nothingness are as scientific -- as knowledgeable about reality -- as men can be. Other intellectuals, whether "scientists" or humanists, artists or computer experts, are no more than conscious or unconscious propagandists. Genuine education, Nietzsche's experiment to incorporate truth's nihilism, requires elimination of their propaganda: "I would drive out of my ideal state the so-called 'educated' just as Plato drove out the poets: this is my terrorism."[13]

Education liberated from that propaganda, the only truly liberal education, reveals that the price of being moral or political is fanatic determination to avoid self-knowledge. The more political men divine life's nihilism, the stronger this fanaticism. A Lincoln or a Churchill are not gripped by the desperation moving a Hess or a Bukharin. Once alive to it, they cease experiencing themselves as political. Then the effort to be political becomes fanaticism which, consciously or unconsciously, confuses or destroys politics. Thus Hitler's apolitical aim was not victory over what common sense politics would call Germany's enemies. It was destruction of Jews, not a German or European victory over democrats or communists.

In this spirit, Hitler ordered that German trains be used primarily to transport Jews to death camps and only secondarily to fight a two or three front war. In his nihilist reveries, the defense of Germany's political borders against democratic and communist armies was secondary. Nobody realized better than Hess that his canonization of Hitler meant fanatic loyalty to such arbitrary goals invented by Hitler's fear of nihilism. That fear links Hess, Hitler, Bukharin and all men determined to be political in an apolitical world.

Nietzsche's hope for the Prussians and for Germany was sparked by his awareness of the apolitical resoluteness which they share with all nihilist politics:

> To be loyal (or true-*Treue*) and for the sake of loyalty to stake one's blood and honor even on evil and dangerous enterprises -- teaching itself this lesson, another people disciplined itself and in so disciplining itself became pregnant and heavy with great hopes.[14]

Chapter 17

Nietzsche
Life and Main Writings

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche was born on October 15, 1844, in Röcken, then part of Prussia. His father, Karl Ludwig Nietzsche, and both grandfathers were Lutheran ministers, one of whom wrote On the Eternal Survival of Christianity: For Edification and Consolation during the Contemporary Crisis in the Theological World. In 1865, while studying classical philology at the University of Leipzig, Nietzsche accidentally came across Schopenhauer's work which he at first accepted but later unsuccessfully attempted to refute. The two deepest influences on Nietzsche were Schopenhauer and Wagner who set Schopenhauer's atheism to music.

As a result probably of illness contracted in the Franco-Prussian War, Nietzsche was allowed to retire from teaching in 1879. This permitted him to spend the next decade, until his insanity in 1889, in the attempt to overcome Schopenhauer's nihilism which he found at the heart of all modern thought and which he traced to its Platonic-Christian roots. He died insane on August 25, 1900 on the eve of the world wars that he predicted and that he hoped would result in an aristocratic victory over the democratic-socialistic forces unleashed by the American and French Revolutions.

The most comprehensive scholarly edition of Nietzsche's work is the *Kritische Gesamtausgabe* edited by Mazzino Montinari and Giorgio Colli (Berlin, 1967ff.). The best English translations are by Walter Kaufmann. The most perceptive attempts to relate Nietzsche's life to his work are his own *Ecce Homo* and "The Free Mind" (Beyond Good and Evil, II). He regarded Thus Spoke Zarathustra as his most profound work. In *Ecce Homo* (III:6) he calls it a work which

> stands completely by itself ... My concept of the Dionysian here becomes the highest deed; measured against it all the rest of human deeds appear poor and conditional. That a Goethe or a Shakespeare would not be able to breathe even for a moment in this monstrous passion and height, that Dante, compared to Zarathustra, is merely a believer and not one who first creates the truth, a world ruling mind (*Geist*), a destiny ... all that is the least thing and gives no concept of the distance, the azure solitude in which this work lives ... add up into one the mind (*Geist*) and the worth of all great souls: All of them together would not be able to produce one of Zarathustra's speeches ... There is no wisdom, no inquiry into the soul, no art of speech before Zarathustra.

Beyond Good and Evil, the Genealogy of Morals and the last part of the Joyful Science were written to explain the Zarathustra.

Heidegger was Nietzsche's only real student. By far the most thoughtful book on Nietzsche is Heidegger's two volume Nietzsche (Pfullingen, 1961) and his chapters "*Nietzsches Wort Gott ist Tot*" in *Holzwege* (Frankfurt am Main, 1950) and "*Wer ist Nietzsches Zarathustra?*" in *Vortraege und Aufsaetze* (Pfullingen, 1954). *Die Selbstbehauptung der Deutschen Universität* (Breslau, 1933) relates Nietzsche's atheism to contemporary science and politics. It was Heidegger's inaugural speech on becoming nazi rector of the University of Freiburg in 1933. *Was Heisst Denken?* (Tübingen, 1961) relates Nietzsche's atheism to the thoughtlessness of contemporary thinking.

Introduction

> *A new meaningless and no longer hospitable (heimatlich) world begins ... through the pathos of science.*[1]

The unsolvable problem at the heart of Nietzsche's thought reveals nothing less than the fundamental alternatives about ultimate reality and science (which knows it). Nietzsche's attempt at a compromise between these alternatives demonstrates both the impossibility, and the perpetual temptation, of compromise.

Nietzsche's understanding of ultimate reality is marred by a tension springing from unsuccessful efforts to refute Schopenhauer and his student, Wagner. These efforts were sparked by Nietzsche's aversion to the atheism which he learned from Schopenhauer and which he radicalized by eliminating those elements responsible for Schopenhauer's morality of universal compassion. That atheism precluded Nietzsche's passionate attack on the democratic-socialistic forces liberated by the American and French Revolutions. Nietzsche saw his conflict as one between truth and life: truth was with radical atheism and therefore against life which was robbed of all dignity and meaning by that atheism: "Compared to the importance of this battle everything else is of no concern: the final question about the conditions of life is raised here and the first attempt is made here to answer this question experimentally. To what extent can truth endure incarnation? -- that is the question, that is the experiment."[2]

Nietzsche wanted to secure life -- a noble life -- against atheistic or democratic leveling by inventing a truth which would not deprive life of aristocratic greatness. Creation of this ennobling or life-enhancing truth was made impossible by Nietzsche's acceptance of radical atheism: god is dead! Nietzsche's aim was construction of a new revolutionary order, a global aristocracy, grounded in an atheism for which reality is meaningless.

Past aristocracies and monarchies had been legitimated by divine right. Persuaded by Schopenhauer's atheism that such rights are unavailable, Nietzsche sought a new, atheistic basis for inequality and slavery in a new conception of ultimate reality. This search is responsible for his three best known teachings about ultimate reality: the superman, the will to power and the eternal return. The superman's will to power creates the eternal return of all things. In this way Nietzsche attempted the rescue of a past characterized by inequality and war from a present bent upon a future of universal peace and equality.

Nietzsche's central problem is that his atheism vitiates the understanding of ultimate reality implied by the superman, the eternal return and the will to power. To grasp this problem -- which Nietzsche never solved -- one must first see the radicality of his atheism. Then one must see how his moral-political aims compelled him to create a notion of ultimate reality capable of overcoming his atheism. Nietzsche's conception of ultimate reality and his politics are as inextricably bound together as they are opposed.

Part I: Ultimate Reality as Nihilism

> *My "philosophy," if I have the right to call that which oppresses me to the very roots of my being so, is no longer communicable ... I hold before myself the picture of Dante and Spinoza who better understood how to bear the lot of solitude. Of course, their way of thinking, contrasted with mine, was one which made solitude bearable; and finally, for all those who had a "god" for company there did not yet really exist what I know as "solitude." For me, my life now consists in the wish that all things might be otherwise than as I conceive them; and that someone might make my "truths" unworthy of belief for me.*[3]

Nietzsche's original and definitive conception of ultimate reality is atheistic: god is dead! Here god does not mean exclusively the biblical god whom Nietzsche interprets as popularized platonism. God means any source of morality, any notion of good and bad, right and wrong.[4] The biblical morality of universal compassion is merely the regnant moral orthodoxy of post Platonic-Christian civilization. Insofar as modernity destroys what Nietzsche rejects as pre-modern superstition it murders god, destroying not only Christian or post-Christian (democratic-socialistic) ethics, but completely obliterating any sense of good and evil, fair and unfair. Nietzsche finds modernity's soul in this atheistic obliteration.[5]

Nietzsche's atheism arises from rejection of the common sense (illiberal) orientation of pre-modern thought. Common sense (the herd instinct) inspires the illusion that one is part of a world existing independently of one's experience of it.[6] Its main question is: What is good for me?, a question answered, almost prior to its being raised, by the moral-political orthodoxies of one's herd. Questioning any herd's answer to illiberalism's central question, Plato claimed that the true good is only inadequately knowable. However he shared the illiberal illusion that it existed and that it was the most important thing to know.[7]

Wherever illiberal (anti-nihilist) thought interpreted itself accurately (platonically), it experienced itself as moral-political philosophy, the striving for an adequate answer to common sense's central question. By locating the core of common sense (illiberal) thought in its moral

intention,[8] Nietzsche demonstrated his unique awareness that platonic apotheosis of illiberalism was central to that delusion.

Nietzsche's nihilism means that common sense and the platonism inspired by it is cowardly unwillingness to confront truth's horror. This horror, the death of god, is nothing mysterious or far-fetched, although -- or because -- it is a deeply personal and incommunicable experience. It is the realization, inherent in any experience at any moment, that reality is nothing but one's experience of it. Anything -- this table, that star, the law of contradiction,[9] the nature of man or god -- is nothing but one's experience of it. The same is true of one's self or soul or mind. Reality is random, essentially unconnected experiences, impressions as Hume called them. The question of what these experiences really are or what causes them, like all questions, has the same nihilist answer or lack of answer in a world whose ultimate reality is determined by the death of god.[10]

Prior to Nietzsche's radical modernity, even so-called modern thinkers still believed in the possibility of impartial, objective -- or "inter-subjective" -- facts.[11] This belief sprang from their faith that their immediate awareness of such things was an awareness of something whose ultimate reality is independent of their experience of it. This faith points to a common sense world in which "selves" or "minds" grasp "things" or "facts." The nihilist concentration on naked experience unmasks as illusory this whole common sense reality.

Nietzsche emphasizes that nihilism is primarily an experience, something radically personal and not generalizable or communicable, depriving one not only of others but of one's own self.[12] Neither selves nor others exist if god is dead. Although only atomized, unrelated experiences exist, the herd instinct (common sense), the product of countless ages of mankind's random, chaotic development, creates the illusion of a common human or even cosmic reality. Nietzsche denies the reality or worth of anything communicable or generalizable, any Platonic-Christian idea or, in more contemporary terms, any democratic-socialistic ideal: god is dead!

In Nietzsche's Zarathustra, the most important book published by him, he reveals atheism's horror through the Ugliest Man and the Pale Criminal.[13] Appropriately Nietzsche places the Ugliest Man, the murderer of god, in the land of death, a realm of terrifying ugliness and desolation. The murderer of god is left with nothing but random, essentially unconnected experiences. At first he makes only inarticulate, unintelligible noises. Only around a god, a common principle of unification, does everything become a coherent community, a world, and

not a chaos of meaningless, atomized impressions.[14] The Ugliest Man, the nihilist, has no self and no world to be shared with other selves. Genuine dialogue or communication requires a world and without a god, only chaos or nothingness exists but no world: "The desolation grows: Woe to him who harbors desolation!"[15] In the words of the traditional marriage union, the Ugliest Man has rent asunder what the now murdered god had joined together.

The nihilist's deep need for privacy, his isolation from any divine or human community, is not so much the result as the cause of what Nietzsche calls his murder of god. That murder, a poetic image of radical atheism, is sparked by the nihilist realization that nothing exists but chaotic, empty experiences. This realization is responsible for the concept of ultimate reality which Nietzsche inherited from Schopenhauer and which he unsuccessfully strove to modify or to abandon.[16]

Like Nietzsche, the Ugliest Man still was too bound by common sense -- that is by moral or political needs -- to be able to leave it at unintelligible, wholly private noises. The impossible effort to combine nihilism with those needs is responsible for the Ugliest Man's shame at his atheism's abysmal amorality. The strength of those needs prevents his being truly nihilistic, that is, prevents his perceiving that nothing is ugly or beautiful, noble or shameful, moral or immoral, if god is dead. What Nietzsche calls shadows of the dead god still rule the Ugliest Man's soul, precluding uncompromising atheistic eradication of the need for god, for any morality or community.[17]

Those shadows compel the Ugliest Man, that half-hearted nihilist, to initiate worship of a jackass for those preferring "to worship god in this form rather than not pray at all."[18] Not to have a god, even if it be only a jackass or a stone -- not to pray -- means to be left with the empty privacy of one's experiences, without a self or a world. The Ugliest Man fears this privacy, the isolation of radical atheism. Like Nietzsche's Pale Criminal, the immensity of his deed is too much for his communal or common-sense needs. The Pale Criminal simply wants to murder for murder's sake. However his common sense persuades him to steal from his victim. Otherwise his murder will seem insane; common sense demands a purpose, a good, for any rational act. When the Pale Criminal is condemned for murdering in order to steal a few dollars, he cannot defend himself: "His soul wanted blood, not theft: he thirsted after the joy of the knife! His poor reason, however, did not fathom his madness and persuaded him: 'What does blood matter!' she said; 'Don't you at least want to steal along with it? To take revenge?' ... So he listened to his poor reason: her speech weighed him down like

lead ... therefore he robbed as he murdered. He did not want to be ashamed of his madness."[19] The reasons demanded by common sense are not available to a nihilist reason.

The Ugliest Man's murder is more radical than the Pale Criminal's who kills only one man. The death of god means the destruction of mankind, of any community, whether within one's own self or country or mankind or the universe. It isolates the nihilist in the nothingness revealed by radical atheism. Horror of this isolation usually prevents more than half-hearted atheism, driving men to revere mere jackasses, shadows of the now dead god. The politically loudest form of contemporary jackass worship is the democratic-socialistic effort to embrace the christian morality while destroying the last vestiges of the traditional Christian faith responsible for that morality.

Contemporary democratic "liberation" movements generally despise traditional Christian orthodoxy while asserting the supreme goodness of its compassion for suffering, impoverished humanity. They insist that men have a right to life, freedom and equality.[20] Had they been tough enough to experience uncompromising atheism, they would see no compelling reason for these rights or for any morality. Like the Pale Criminal, they need their morality in order not to appear insane to a reason informed by common sense. Morality in all its forms springs from dread of radical, incommunicable nihilism.

Insofar as he has the strength of his nihilist convictions, the Ugliest Man's hallmark is silence or incommunicable unintelligible noise, not meaningful dialogue. Consequently he is repelled by the all-intrusive compassion of modern egalitarians, their pity for weakness and suffering. That pity is the political form of the universal love of the god murdered by him. Compassion itself is political, a feeling with or for others. The Ugliest Man can endure no witnesses -- least of all compassionate ones -- of his nihilist isolation. The nihilist wants to remain alone, because in reality he is alone, in the privacy of that isolation, unencumbered by the need to measure himself by Plato's good or to be "saved" by Christian compassion or by democratic-socialistic secularizations of that compassion. This compassion points to the ultimate reality of a "god" linking all men -- even and especially the lowest and most degraded -- in a common world. Without the Christian god, contemporary egalitarian concern for suffering mankind is trivial sentimentality. However a similar criticism holds for the Ugliest Man's heroic pride in his self-contempt and for Nietzsche's praise of that pride.

The half-hearted nihilist's self-contempt is meaningful only if reality supplies some standard of beauty or greatness -- some god -- in the light of which nihilism's ugliness is seen to be low and shameful. Genuine atheists, those murdering god once and for all, dismiss both the Ugliest Man's shame and his pride as jackass worship. Privacy's heart is an atheism precluding the reality of anything but random, incommunicable experiences.[21]

Piety or morality make that privacy impossible. Around a "god" nihilism's desolation is transformed into a world, a community in which selves exist and communicate with other selves in virtue of a common humanity in a common world. Here the need for nihilist privacy is regarded as insane. The old Greek word for privacy was "idiocy", inability to share in the common (or common sense) world made possible by "god."[22] While the need for privacy is better known in modernity, it remains anathema to the vast majority who, like the Ugliest Man and Pale Criminal, appease their dread of it by jackass worship. Terror at privacy's emptiness forces them to interpret their "selves" in terms of a community created by Platonic-Christian ideas or today by democratic-socialist ideals.[23] They are pious and moral, however impious or liberated they may seem to fellow jackass worshipers. Their communal, common-sense needs are at home only in that worship. Atheism's incommunicability arises from its radical privacy.

Nothing of importance in the nihilist is impersonal or communicable. Nihilist courage distinguishes Nietzsche's philosophic depth from the shallow, impersonal triviality of intellectuals, scientists or humanists, who glory in their facile ability to communicate. A genuinely liberal -- that is, liberating -- education requires their elimination: "I would drive out my ideal state the so-called 'educated' just as Plato drove out the poets: this is my terrorism."[24]

Nietzsche sometimes calls those able to endure nihilism scientists. Originally *scientia* meant knowledge of ultimate reality and those who had it, the scientists, were the knowers *par excellence*. Nietzsche regards himself as a scientist in this crucial sense.[25] If reality is nihilistic, science is wholly experiential or experimental, not hypothetical or concerned with testing theories. Science as a primarily hypothetical enterprise can trace its pedigree at least to Nietzsche's greatest enemy, Socrates.

In Plato's *Phaedo*, Socrates tells of his unsuccessful youthful efforts to uncover the reality of things by looking directly at them. He soon came to believe that this direct approach blinded him, leaving him with nothing but incoherent experience.[26] Unable to leave it at this ni-

hilist chaos, he needed what Nietzsche called a world, and therefore a god or cosmic mind, an integrating principle, uniting immediate experience's chaotic diversity into a coherent, rational whole. Socratic positing of this intelligible reality or universal good "saves the appearances" from nihilism. Like a good anti-nihilist scientist, Socrates spent his life testing this all-encompassing hypothesis. Unlike half-hearted nihilist scientists, Socrates did not test it by appeal to immediate experience. His earlier attempts had shown him that such testing, consistently pursued -- that is, with no jackass worship -- is nihilistic. Instead Socrates' testing of his main hypothesis led him to dialogic examination of ordinary common sense speech about right and wrong, good and bad.

Socrates' rejection of nihilist science made him enter the Athenian marketplace to test the main *logoi* of common sense, the speech of his fellow Athenians and their teachers about moral-political things. This examination of common sense political speech and opinion replaced earlier Socratic efforts to look directly at reality without recourse to common sense. It subordinated concern with the heavens and with Being to moral-political question, "calling philosophy down from the heavens, it set her in the cities and homes of men."[27]

Nietzsche's life-long fascination with Socrates arose from his realization that Socratic dialectic was the only consistent enemy of nihilist science. Insofar as Socrates admitted his inability to answer common sense's main question, to know the good, he was a philosopher or seeker and not a scientist, one who knew the answer. Nevertheless his goal, although unachieved, was to be a scientist. Socrates claimed not to know what was good for himself although he did claim to know that this was the crucial question always confronting thoughtful men. In this sense he knew what he did not know.

Most thinkers after Socrates believed that they had answered common sense's chief question. To be sure their answers often were opposed. Nietzsche notes that they, including Socrates, generally agreed on the worth of rational inquiry, on the preference for humanitarian goals over narrow tribal loyalties, on the value of truth over falsehood. More generally, Nietzsche maintains that any preference -- indeed any desire![28] -- is informed by the common sense orientation at the core of Socratic dialectic. For it aims to answer the question of what is right and good. Insofar as scientists value any hypothesis or theory, not to speak of valuing science itself, they are still jackass worshipers, piously unaware that life has no value.

Perhaps the most persistent intellectual form of contemporary jackass worship is faith in the progress of civilization over barbarism, the

conviction that contemporary intellectuals, humanistically and scientifically educated, are more enlightened than prehistoric cavemen or cannibals. Nietzsche wanted to drive educators championing this faith out of the schools. If god is dead, a caveman who realized that life is nothing but random impressions knew all there is to know about reality! That caveman was a genuine scientist, far more enlightened than so-called scientists, believers in a science which is no more than sophisticated jackass worship.

This false science rests upon an illusory interpretation of speech and thought. Nietzsche rejects any speech, any articulate "rational" effort to communicate, as an illusive bridge, since nothing -- no selves and no world -- exists within which or between which bridges might be erected.[29] Attempts to communicate, to teach or to learn, obfuscate the nihilist (liberal) nature of reality. Such attempts are merely empty rhetoric, propaganda. The Ugliest Man's silence or purely private noises are closer to reality's nihilism, and therefore more scientific, than illiberal or pseudo-liberal faith in anything communicable or generalizable, any hypothesis or theory. Nihilist scientists avoid what Newton, near the end of his Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy, only claimed to avoid: "I frame no hypothesis." Had his science been nihilist, had it really framed no hypotheses which attempted to unify or harmonize essentially chaotic experiences, it could not have been shared through that book or any communicable work.

Concern with a communicable science, if consistent, must return to the common sense, illiberal orientation which Socratic dialectic advocated to save the appearances from immediate experience's nihilism. Communicable science presupposes a world in which scientists can communicate meaningfully. That world is revealed by common sense, not by immediate experience! The main question for communicable science, a science grounded in common sense, is the moral-political question of the good life. The only consistent alternative to such sophisticated jackass worship is nihilist science which is radically amoral and apolitical precisely because it is radically atheistic.

Non-nihilist efforts to be scientific, however progressive or enlightened they may seem, "still take their fire from a blaze ignited by a faith of millennia, the Christian faith which also was Plato's faith."[30] This platonic-Christian faith encourages a cooperative science in which scientists build on each other's findings, persuading one another to abandon old for newer more comprehensive, more coherent theories. Against this cooperative, dialogic science Nietzsche opposes nihilist

science, the atheist experience of life as inarticulate experience, unredeemed by common sense.

Nietzsche might have left it at this "joyful science" for which nothing is worth taking seriously.[31] In that case, he would have accepted Schopenhauer's atheism while rejecting those elements responsible for Schopenhauer's universal compassion in favor of universal ridicule of men ensnared by common sense's illusions. Nietzsche's strong moral-political needs, his aristocratic conscience, prevented acceptance of this joyful (nihilist) science.

Those needs compelled him to do what his greatest enemy, Socrates, had done. They forced him to save the appearances from experience's nihilism by answering common sense's chief question: How should one live? Like Socrates he abandoned nihilist science for which common sense, and therefore that question, is meaningless. Unlike Socrates, he believed that conscious reason or science, if honestly pursued, led to nihilistic subversion of common sense. Socrates came to see his later dialogic approach as reasonable, while rejecting his earlier nihilism as irrational. Nietzsche, paradoxically, was compelled by his attachment to common sense, to his moral or political preferences, to subordinate what he called the Apollonian realm, the world of conscious reason or science, to the Dionysian realm, the world of unconscious instinct and will. Only in this way could he present a moral-political teaching immune to scientific reduction of everything to chaotic experience.

In a nihilist reality there is nothing and nobody to teach or to learn. But Nietzsche had a moral-political teaching for which he needed students, men able to implement it. Convinced that science was essentially nihilist, Nietzsche's teaching could not be a dialogic reasoning together, as Socrates' had been. Instead Nietzsche's dionysian monologues and aphorisms appeal to instinct, unconscious depth: "Every mistake in every sense is the result of degeneration of instinct ... all that is good is instinct ... all that is good is inherited; what is not inherited is imperfect, is merely a beginning."[32] One's conscious ego and its experiences are the playthings of one's sub-conscious self. One's conscious common sense life -- the life of nihilism -- is merely apparent; the reality is wordless depth, the instinctual, dionysian self.

Paradoxically Nietzsche opposes Socratic self-knowledge, a conscious dialogic pursuit, precisely because he shares Socratic aversion to nihilist science: "Socrates, to confess it openly, is so close to me that I almost always fight a battle against him."[33] Nietzsche rightly described himself as a topsy-turvy platonist and Heidegger rightly called him the

most desperate, unrestrained platonist in Western metaphysics.[34] This unrestrained, dionysian and therefore un-platonic, platonism informs Nietzsche's yearning to find a nihilist way out of nihilism through reliance on unconscious instinct rather than on conscious reason. This reliance is responsible for the doctrines on ultimate reality intended to overcome nihilism: the eternal return, the superman and the will to power.

Part II: Ultimate Reality as the Superman's Will to Overcome Nihilism

> *My teaching is mild against those without faith in it; it has no hell or threats. Those without faith are left with an empty, flighty life in their own consciousness.*[35]
>
> *Of course I would much prefer to be a Basel professor than god, but I have not dared to push my private egotism so far as to abandon the creation of the world for its sake.*[36]

A man's unconscious instinctive self is his will to power. The hallmark of the will to power is the drive to overpower all conscious, rational checks to human creativity. For these checks, like all conscious rational experience, are nihilistic. The will to power is the will to overpower the nihilism informing conscious rational experience. That experience is under the aegis of Apollo, the god of beautiful forms and rationality, while the will to power, the heart of reality, is Dionysian after the god of drunkedness, instinct, the unconscious. Dionysian deities encourage the will to overpower currently authoritative moral checks. Nietzsche calls deities responsible for such checks moral, holy or humanitarian gods: "The disproof of god -- actually only the moral god is disproven."[37] Dionysian gods sanctify transgression of the moralities invented by Apollonian or moral gods. Thus Nietzsche opposes the humanitarian moralities which shaped mankind's goals from Plato and Jesus to Jefferson and Marx: "Have I been understood? -- Dionysus against the Crucified ... "[38]

The Dionysian will to overpower is not essentially a will to preserve anything in the conscious, Apollonian world – including one's own self. Basically its creativity means destruction of old and creation of new images of man, moralities according to which life is lived. To live in a dionysian way means imposition of the morality which one's unconscious self imposes on one's conscious ego, creating the world ever anew in the image of that self. The heart of a philosopher's thought is his unconscious moral intention, his will to overpower the current (nihilist) morality: "This is an old, eternal story ... which occurs as soon as a philosophy begins to believe in itself. It always creates the world in its image; it cannot do otherwise. Philosophy is this tyrannic drive itself, the most intellectual (*geistigste*) will to power, to 'creation of the world,' to the *causa prima*."[39]

The main clue to a philosopher's thought is the morality dictated by his unconscious will to power: "Gradually what every great philosophy to date has been became clear to me: ... namely that the moral or immoral intention in every philosophy constitutes the actual living seed out of which the whole plant always grew. In fact one does well and acts sensibly if, in explaining the ground for a philosopher's most abstruse metaphysical assertions, one always asks oneself first: at what morality does it (does he) aim? Therefore I do not believe that a passion for knowledge is the father of philosophy, but that another drive, here as elsewhere, employs knowledge (and ignorance) merely as a tool ... For every passion is tyrannic and, as such, attempts to philosophize ... In the philosopher there is absolutely nothing impersonal."[40]

The philosopher's radically personal, unconscious core makes his the human life most in harmony with a universe which is "the will to power and nothing else! And you yourselves also are this will to power -- and nothing else!"[41] If the unconscious, dionysian will to power gives rise to all forms of conscious, apollonian creativity, there is little significance in distinctions between artistic and technological creativity or between the sciences and the humanities. All are products of the will to power's creativity. Indeed the whole conscious universe springs from man's unconscious creativity![42]

Nietzsche traces mankind's different peoples to the different moralities created by the great lovers whose will to overpower currently regnant values led to their creation of new values. To be means to be creative -- to be will to overpower -- and the highest creativity forges the morality animating lesser creators. By nature man is not the conscious rational animal but the unconscious value creating will to over-

power. The greatest creators are the philosophers or lawgivers responsible for the goals uniting their peoples.

In the Zarathustra, Nietzsche mentions the lawgivers of Greece, Persia, Israel and Prussia. He complains that the absence of a goal for mankind means the absence of mankind. Mankind does not exist yet![43] It never will exist unless a lover arises whose passion for mankind is as creative as Homer's love for his Greeks, Moses' for his Jews or Zarathustra's for his Persians. Obviously Nietzsche saw himself (or his superman) as this lover and the Prussians, however harshly he criticized them, were the people on whom he pinned his great anti-egalitarian hopes. Nietzsche needed the Prussian heirs of Fredrick the Great's remarkable combination of skepticism and dogmatism:[44] a conscious skepticism about all contemporary humanitarian-christian aims which is guided by an unconscious, dionysian will prepared to "be loyal (or true-*Treue*) and for the sake of loyalty to stake honor and blood even on evil and dangerous things. With this teaching [the Prussians] overcame themselves ... and became pregnant and heavy with great hopes."[45]

Nietzsche's loathing for the egalitarianism spread by the American and French Revolutions inspired his hope for a global atheist aristocracy prepared to venture on those "evil, dangerous" paths. For Nietzsche saw his war against that egalitarianism as a life and death struggle between opposed instincts not as a conflict open to rational arbitration. In this merciless war, victory requires tyrannical breeding over millennia of aristocratic (and slavish) instincts on a global scale, no matter what the cost in human lives. This global breeding will compel the aristocrat to experience his right to rule, and the slave his need to obey, as unconscious, instinctual demands. Such dionysian demands make men deaf to the siren-song of apollonian or socratic questioning which, honestly pursued, culminates in nihilism. This deafness, the "perfected automism of instinct" is "the presupposition of every mastery, of every kind of perfection in the art of life."[46] Preferring mankind's destruction to democratic-socialistic world hegemony,[47] Nietzsche was prepared to pay any price, however immoral or dangerous, to secure his global atheist aristocracy. Among Europeans, the Prussians still had the strength of will to take the harsh, unpopular steps needed to create that aristocracy. Instead of fighting petty wars with France, Germany, led by Prussia, should unite with the French, a unity which would combine strength of will (Prussians) and intelligence (French). Together, under a new Napoleon, they could control Europe and the world, providing the political conditions for Nietzsche's crusade against democracy and socialism.[48]

In the absence of that crusade, Nietzsche feared that modern education's egalitarianism in both its humanist and scientific forms will create men beneath contempt:

> The earth becomes petty and on it hops the last man who makes everything petty ... Who still wants to rule? Who still to obey? Both are too hard. No shepherd and one herd. Everybody wants the same; everybody is the same (or equal): Anyone who feels otherwise goes voluntarily to the psychiatrist. 'Formerly the whole world was in error' -- say the most sophisticated last men and they blink.[49]

Nietzsche attempted an aristocratic nihilism intended to use democratic leveling for aristocratic ends. He prized many traditional valuations which an egalitarian creativity experiences as hateful prejudice: the subordination of women to men, the acceptance of the need for war, slavery and suffering and, above all, the platonic sovereignty of philosophy over all arts and sciences:

> This is my pity for all that is past, that I see it abandoned -- abandoned to the pleasure, the thought, the insanity of every generation which comes along and reinterprets all the past as a bridge to itself! A great tyrant could come, a shrewd monster, who tyrannized over everything ... until it became a bridge to him ... This is the other danger and my other pity -- whoever is born from the scum, his recollection goes back to his grandfather -- with his grandfather, however, time stops. Thus the past is abandoned: for the scum could become master one day and all time would drown in shallow waters. Therefore a new aristocracy is needed which is opposed to all scum and everything tyrannic and which would write the word 'noble' on new tablets.[50]

Nietzsche's loathing for modern egalitarians, combined with his nihilist interpretation of conscious reason and science, were responsible for his turn to an unconscious instinctual ultimate reality. Only in this way could he justify his strong political-moral passions in a nihilist world. Then that world is only apparently nihilistic (the conscious, common sense world); in reality it is unconscious, instinctual will to overpower which causes that apparent nihilism. Nietzsche hoped that his global atheist aristocracy would use the rest of mankind as a labo-

ratory to breed a few supermen. The superman's Dionysian will to overpower would save the past from drowning in democracy's shallow waters by willing the eternal return of past inequalities.

The superman's willing of this eternal return is possible only if his will can emancipate itself from hatred of its past, a hatred responsible for modern egalitarian demands to be liberated from that past. The heart of Nietzsche's anti-nihilist reality, the will to overpower, is frustrated in its drive to overpower because it itself is overpowered by the now practically overwhelming power of its past acts of will from the worm and the ape to Nietzsche and, if possible, to the superman. Nietzsche complains that man's capacity to freely will his future is circumscribed by a past history of willfulness controlled by

> fragments and limbs and gruesome accidents -- but no men! ... 'It was' -- this is the name of the will's teeth gnashing and loneliest misery. Powerless against what has been done, the will is an angry spectator of all the past.[51]

To emancipate itself from its hatred for the past, the superman's will must will the past as the creation of the same Dionysian will to overpower which creates the future. Can the past be willed if it is not somehow the future? For the will must exist prior to its past, if it is to will that it be. It can will its past only if its past also is its future, if it affirms the past as the creation of its own will to overpower:

> To redeem the past and to recreate all 'it was' into a 'thus I willed it' -- that alone I would call redemption! ... All 'it was' is a fragment, a riddle, a gruesome accident -- until the creative will says to it: 'but I willed it to be thus!' Until the creative will says to it: 'But I will it to be thus! Thus will I will it ... Will the will now become its own redeemer and bringer of glad tidings? Has it unlearned the spirit of revenge and all gnashing of teeth?[52]

The superman's will to overpower must resolve to will the past for what it was in reality: its own product. For nothing exists in reality except that unconscious, Dionysian will and its conscious creations. Only in the superman's willing will this will come into its own. The insuperable obstacle to Nietzsche's (as distinct from the superman's) willing the past is the need to will the egalitarian aspects responsible for the Last Men, the contemporary democrats and socialists, detested by him.

Nietzsche wants only the past's nobility to recur eternally, not its base, slavish elements. Indeed he wants only the as yet non-existent superman to recur eternally:

> My martyr's cross was not my knowledge that man is bad ... Alas, his worst still is so petty! Alas, his best still is so petty! The great revulsion against man -- that choked me and crept into my throat ... Even the greatest man was all too petty! -- that was my revulsion against man -- ! And that there should be eternal return even of the pettiest! -- That was my revulsion against all existence! An abomination! An abomination![53]

In an unpublished fragment from the time of the Zarathustra, Nietzsche emphasizes his inability to will the eternal return: "I do not want this life again. How have I endured it? Creatively. What permits me to endure its sight? The sight of the superman who affirms life. I myself have tried to affirm it -- alas!"[54]

It is crucial to see why, contrary to Nietzsche's own desires, his will to overpower cannot simply will the past's nobility and abandon its slavish, base elements. Nietzsche has recourse to the will to overpower primarily to overpower a nihilist reality in which any moral-political concern is futile. His aristocratic contempt for contemporary egalitarianism forced him to reject the inherent nihilism of conscious experience in favor of that unconscious will to overpower it. Thus the will to power is primarily a will to overpower nihilism. It is Nietzsche's version of what Descartes and Bacon called the conquest of nature. But if ultimate reality is solely this Dionysian will to overpower, then everything in the conscious, common sense world must be caused by it. Since everything includes contemporary egalitarians and the past responsible for them, the will to overpower must be responsible for them too. Unlike Nietzsche, the superman will be fully in harmony with that will; only he can will the eternal return of the whole past.

Although the past was responsible for the present egalitarianism detested by Nietzsche, for the most part it was characterized by the inequalities dear to him. However, lack of awareness of nihilism's threat formerly led men to take those inequalities for granted, to interpret them as necessary consequences of natural or divine justice. Modern thinkers culminating in Nietzsche made men aware that human creativity or technology was not limited by anything. Nietzsche feared that contemporary egalitarians would employ this unlimited power to create a world of universal peace and equality. He yearned for a superman

whose will to overpower nihilism and egalitarianism would use modernity's immense power to create the eternal return of the past's inequality and wars.[55] Then there would be no wars to end all wars.

Nietzsche's revulsion at contemporary egalitarian "liberation" movements and their past roots distinguished him from his superman whose will would guarantee the eternal return of all history including that egalitarianism. Indeed the superman's willing of everything's eternal return is meant to be responsible for everything's ultimate reality! Reality is nothing but his will to power: "For me -- how could there be anything outside of me? There is nothing outside! ... I live in my own light, I drink back into myself the flames which break out of me."[56]

This dependence of all reality upon the superman's will to overpower nihilism distinguishes Nietzsche's eternal return teaching from previous ones. Whether Platonic, Stoic or Hindu, earlier teachings asserted that things exist and return eternally because that is their nature and the nature of the universe. A superman's will was not believed necessary to guarantee that inequality and war never cease or that spring always precede summer or that the sun always rise:

> One morning Zarathustra rose with the dawn, stepped before the sun and spoke thusly to her: 'You great star! What would be your happiness, if you did not have those for whom you shine! ... Without me you would have become weary of your light and of your journey.'[57]

Teachings which asserted that divine or natural support guaranteed eternal return sprang from faith in the common-sense or apollonian orientation which Nietzsche condemns as nihilistic. It is precisely to rescue this apollonian world and its eternal return from nihilism that Nietzsche's superman must will everything's eternal return. Unredeemed by his dionysian will, reality is nothing but a nihilist chaos of empty experience easily drowned in modern democracy's shallow waters. Only the superman's will prevents this drowning, saving reality -- a noble reality -- from nihilism's inability to resist democratic-socialist leveling. It thereby saves every being "standing over it as its own heaven, its round roof, its eternal security,"[58] protecting it against the death of god. However, as Nietzsche admitted, "there is revenge at work, revenge against life itself, when a profound sufferer takes life under his protection."[59]

The superman's will to save the common sense universe (by willing everything's eternal return) springs from repugnance to nihilism. If reality is nihilistic -- and Nietzsche never denied this of all conscious

life -- that repugnance is directed against reality itself. It is a desire for vengeance against reality, a need to conquer nature. Nietzsche's moral aversion to egalitarian leveling, like all moral-political concerns, would be at home only in the common sense orientation apotheosized by platonism. That aversion sparked the topsy-turvy, dionysian platonism responsible for the fantastic derivation of the whole universe from the superman's unconscious will to overpower nihilism.

Nietzsche's nihilism left no room for any political ambition, including his own. His abiding, because unsolvable, problem arose from unwillingness to abandon either the nihilism or the ambition. Derivation of superficial, conscious communication from unconscious, dionysian depth is not really abandonment of nihilism. Like nihilism this subordination justifies nothing or everything. Indeed its justification of the equalitarianism detested by Nietzsche prevents his willing eternal return.

Since that subconscious will or self is unavailable for rational scrutiny, nobody can know whether it is essentially aristocratic, egalitarian or even nihilist. For, unlike Freud and others, who consciously and rationally try to examine the unconscious self, Nietzsche realized that such examination literally would be self-defeating, restoring the nihilism which the primacy of inner, dionysian depth was meant to overpower. Since that inward depth has no external, conscious manifestation,

> there is a famous danger for this inwardness about which it is assumed that it cannot even be seen from outside: It might some day take the opportunity to vanish. From outside one would notice its absence as little as its previous presence.[60]

At bottom, recourse to the redemptive powers of Dionysus, of unconscious experience, is a *deus ex machina* for halfhearted nihilists incapable of overcoming their moral-political needs. Those needs are responsible for Dionysus, the concept of an unconscious instinctual will to overpower the nihilism of Apollo's conscious, common sense world. Dionysus is the yearning to bestow depth or substance on what is in reality groundless, if god is dead. Half-hearted nihilists who rely on that depth for salvation may share or oppose Nietzsche's aristocratic taste:

> There are those who preach my teaching about life and yet are preachers of equality ... They wish to hurt those who now have power ... With these preachers of equality I do not want

> to be confused ... For to me justice says 'Men are not equal.' And they should not become equal![61]

Dionysus is for half-hearted nihilists what Jesus is for Christians or the idea of the good for Socrates or the rights of man for Jefferson or historical determinism for Hegel or Marx.

To be consistent, Nietzsche needed either 1) to be a nihilist scientist comprehending reality as nothing but incoherent, atheist experience or 2) to return to the only consistent form of anti-nihilist science, Socrates' dialectical attempt to answer common sense's central question. Although he realized that all anti-nihilist science, all communicable or cooperative inquiry, is merely empty rhetoric, his powerful aversion to democratic leveling prevented his being more than a half-hearted nihilist. No moral-political commitment can be combined consistently with a notion of ultimate reality which denies the primacy of common sense's main question. Awareness of this impossibility springs from the realization that the crucial choice always confronting thoughtful men is between nihilist and anti-nihilist (Socratic) science.

This choice is obfuscated by all attempts to compromise between, or to harmonize, the two alternatives. If reality is nihilist, it is foolish to be concerned with any communicable science, a common inquiry in which scientists can work with each other and for each other. If reality is anti-nihilist, the only genuine science is Socrates' dialogic efforts to answer common sense's chief question. Then not philosophy as such, but political-moral philosophy, is queen of the sciences. All attempts to dethrone Socratic or political philosophy -- whether by the study of the heavens or of Being or of anything else -- are nihilistic. Intentionally or unintentionally they have abandoned common sense's central question and have gone to the devil (nihilism) for inspiration as Mann's Doktor Faustus did.[62] That inspiration also is responsible for the democratic demotion of the question to one question (the political one) out of many equal competitors such as the "ontological" or "psychological" or "aesthetic" or "economic", etc. questions. However much common sense may differ among different peoples and ages, its guiding question, the moral-political question, remains the same, although the answers to that question differ widely. In this crucial sense common sense is not democratic, its concerns have an aristocratic order determined by its main question. Denial of that question's primacy is denial of common sense. This denial informs what Nietzsche means by the death of god or nihilism.

Nietzsche knew that more was to be learned from the errors of thoughtful men than from the truths of little men.[63] His error was the futile attempt to harmonize the fundamental alternatives concerning ultimate reality. The profound lesson to be learned from that error is nothing less than what science, human knowledge, is and can be and what it is not and cannot be. Most of what has been called science (or rational inquiry) since Socrates has been neither nihilist nor anti-nihilist. Instead, like Nietzsche, if without his thoughtfulness, vain efforts at compromise have been and are being made. This is especially true of the modern experimental sciences founded by Galileo, Bacon and Descartes.

Insofar as these modern sciences are meant to be cooperative, universally comprehensible enterprises, they are -- usually without realizing it -- subordinate to moral-political philosophy and, in particular, to Socratic efforts to answer common sense's main question. Insofar as they are meant to be nihilist, and therefore atheistic and amoral, sciences they preclude any cooperation or meaningful dialogue between scientists. If nihilist science has any accurate external expression, it is something akin to the Ugliest Man's silence or to his inarticulate, purely personal noises.

Nietzsche's error reveals the incommensurability of man's fundamental alternatives: the Socratic (illiberal) or the nihilist (liberal), intellectual cowardice or intellectual honesty. Here no compromise or harmony is possible: Either/Or! Compromising "sciences" are themselves compromised and, as such, deserve no more serious attention than any jackass worship, any of pseudo-liberalism's "consciousness raising." "Dionysus," passionate dread of reality's nihilism, compelled Socrates to abandon liberal science for the dialogic attempt to answer illiberalism's main question. The spirited attack on science propelled by that same dread was responsible for Nietzsche's topsy-turvy platonism, his enslavement of reason to sub-conscious dionysian will to overpower nihilism. Confronted with the rage of "Dionysus," intellectual honesty, genuine liberalism, is hard, if not impossible! "*Wer spricht von Siegen - Überstehn ist alles*!"[64]

Chapter 18

Addendum to the Nietzsche Essay

Reply to Paul Basinski's Contention that Nietzsche Saw his Willing or Creativity as Conscious, Not Unconscious.

> *We [Rohde, Burckhardt and Nietzsche] are fundamentally related to each other as three fundamental nihilists, although I myself, as you perhaps notice, still do not yet doubt that I will find a way out and the hole through which one gets to 'something.'*[1]

I do mean that for Nietzsche (and for any rational being) all willing to be something and not nothing -- all life as contrasted with death or nothingness -- is unconscious or sub-conscious, unaware of reality's nihilism. To be conscious is to realize that nihilism. Failure to know it arises not from blindness, but from cowardice. For it is painfully obvious that nothing is more than empty experiences or impressions. Only fear of being nothing, of death, prevents acknowledgment of life's nihilism! Consciousness (reason) means the courage to make this acknowledgment to oneself. This, and only this, is what it means to be a scientist!

Like Nietzsche, most men prefer to be unconscious, unaware of what they know to be true, since truth is heart-breaking -- that is, they prefer to be pseudo-liberals rather than real liberals. This cowardice is responsible for Nietzsche's retreat from Apollo (reason, science, consciousness) to Dionysus (unconscious will to overpower reality's emptiness, to fill that void with meaning). Dionysus, as Mann shows in Death in Venice, is the passions infuriated at their devaluation by science and reason. Nietzsche's Dionysus resembles what Hume calls custom, the most powerful instinct of human "nature" which, nev-

ertheless, is still illusory in its determination to enforce the illiberal faith that life is not nothing. It is the attack of common sense (of illiberalism, philosophy, morality, religion, politics there is no essential difference between them) against liberal, liberating education. It is the attack of the passions which always are political (religious) and therefore philosophic, against their devaluation by reason (science). On this crucial point, Nietzsche's followers (not Nietzsche) are blind, unaware that the passions (Dionysus) always are "rational" (in the philosophic sense of reason), that is, political. It is reason (science) that is nihilist, not the passions, which are wholly discredited by reason.

It is Socratic (political-philosophic) "reason" which means to guide the passions, not to nullify them as Nietzschean (scientific-nihilist) reason does. Nietzsche's desperate flight to Dionysus reflects his hopeless yearning -- the hopeless yearning of all scientifically enlightened passions! -- to resuscitate illiberalism in a liberal (nihilist) world. This yearning is responsible for the pious atheism discerned by Zarathustra's unemployed Pope in Nietzsche. But piety is meaningless in an atheist world in which it is mere jackass-worship. The illiberalism sparking religion, philosophy, politics and morality cannot be resuscitated by a superman's willing them. That willing is at the heart of liberalism and its "creativity." It has no place in illiberalism whose political-philosophic heart is the illusion of a permanent non-arbitrary good or god. Deprived of that illusion, the passions (Dionysus) are exposed as aimless, fanatic lunacies. Nietzsche's desperate need to obfuscate this exposure is responsible for his "philosophy," his inability to abandon philosophy for science. The popular usage of "philosophy" reflects the same need, although usually lacking Nietzsche's desperation: someone's philosophy about something usually means his attempt to make sense of it, to make something of its nothingness. Genuine reason (science) refuses to participate in this swindle. For reason, if honest with itself, sees that life is nothing. Period!

Unlike Nietzsche, I am a genuine liberal not a pseudo-liberal, that is, I realize there is no escape from nihilism; while Nietzsche showed his many followers how to appease their fear of nihilism by recourse to sub-conscious intelligence or "creativity" ("will to power"). Unlike most of those followers, Nietzsche saw that the effort to make subconsciousness conscious (as, for example, Freud does) is literally self-defeating, reducing self and world to nothing. In any case, Nietzsche, like all pseudo-liberals, cannot believe that nothing amounts to anything. This would rob their lives of seriousness. Thus even if they perceive the stupidity of all moral-political things, that is, of all desires, they

still need to invent a world in which these delusions can thrive -- but now without the support bestowed on them by philosophic (Socratic) thought. This pseudo-liberal need is responsible for political liberalism from Machiavelli and Locke to Nietzsche, Marx and Sartre. I mean pseudo-liberalism's transformation of politics into propaganda designed to inculcate the faith that life is not nothing, whether that propaganda is democratic, communist or nazi.

Political liberalism makes men believe that they are free to establish whatever orders and modes their capacity for fraud and force can devise. My liberalism is not political. It offers no moral-political hope for mankind or for me; it knows that nothing amounts to anything. My notion of liberal education is confronting students and teachers with this truth in a world in which the distinction between truth and falsity, like all distinctions, is groundless. Liberal education begins and ends with this confrontation; it cannot -- and I believe should not -- show students and teachers how, or whether, to live or to die.

The recourse to unconscious depth (the discovery of a true, subconscious self) like faith in god or history or human rights or a master race, is an illiberal (political) attempt to obfuscate reality and thus make genuinely liberal science or education impossible.

Chapter 19

Note to Paul Basinski on Nietzsche, Strauss and Related Matters

What though the field be lost? All is not lost; the unconquerable will; and study of revenge, immortal hate and courage never to submit or yield.[1]

Liberalism is atheist and nihilist. As such it rejects all nonarbitrary moral-political-religious restraints. Strauss opposed the liberalism of Hobbes and Hegel: "Both construct human society by starting from the untrue assumption that man as man is thinkable as a being that lacks awareness of sacred restraints."[2] Strauss was wrong: sacred restraints do not exist. Acknowledgement of their non-existence is morality's core, if morality means anything in reality's nihilism: what men do is "caused" solely by their doing it, by their always arbitrary will to do it. Goethe's Faust rightly translates John (I:1): In the beginning was the deed! The reason or goal of any desire is the desire itself. Liberal (as opposed to illiberal) reason, science as opposed to philosophy, reveals this universal aimlessness. Deprived of any external measure or goal to moderate their excesses, desires are fanaticized by liberal, liberating education. Then strident demands, the prelude to hot or cold fights, replace the possibility of peaceful, "rational" compromise which is the hallmark of philosophic-political (illiberal) education. That is why I do not for a moment believe that the collapse of communism's evil empire would result in more domestic peace in America and the other liberal democracies. On the contrary, the existence of that external threat forces a certain amount of domestic tranquility, compelling otherwise opposed forces (civil war) to unite against it.

Does anyone really believe that communism's defeat would eliminate what Jaffa rightly described as "the rancid passions, the dislike,

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ick, the violent, fanatic reaction of de-
evaluation by nihilist reason. That reac-

tion leaves -- and will leave -- little danger of universal peace and security. Again, I am reminded of 1 Thessalonians (5:3), a favorite weapon of the political theologian, Carl Schmitt, against what he condemns as the teaching of the Antichrist: "For when they shall say, peace and security, then sudden destruction cometh upon them ... and they shall not escape!" In this political spirit, Schmitt insisted that he would be the enemy of anyone who had no enemies![8]

Reality (nature and human nature) is apolitical, nihilist; human desire is not. When awakened to its devaluation by science (liberal education) desire becomes the wrath of Ahab, the "malignant, calm, cold reasonable anger" of Stavrogin, the heart (or heartlessness) of contemporary "higher" education and its professors. America's colleges and universities are no help in insuring domestic peace and tranquility. Only those duped by college P.R. departments expect any such help from that quarter. What can be expected is crusades defending "personkind" against all those arbitrarily selected to be its enemies. Nietzsche's last men are not in our future. His Pale Criminal should have taught Nietzsche the lesson which he and Tocqueville failed to heed: human passion and its spiritedness will become more violent, the more liberal education's always unwelcome lesson sinks in: Man is the ungrateful biped!

Here are a few random thoughts on your Nietzsche interpretation and related issues:

1. When Socrates says his wisdom is a dream, he also believes to know that true wisdom is no dream -- and to know that it exists.

2. Nihilism need not be engendered. It is all anything ever is!

3. You are too hard on Jaffa, Strauss, etc. How can they not consider nihilists, especially radical ones like me, crazy?

4. Ruthlessness is needed to do the impossible -- to conquer nihilism! In general you don't seem to see that Nietzsche was out to conquer nihilism, not establish it. For Nietzsche god is dead and he wants to revive Him in the Superman; for me god never was (or could be) alive.[9]

5. Nihilism always is; it is not a movement of the West's history (nor is it a "destiny").

6. Does recognizing the truth make one "higher?" As Kleist noted, it surely is sad for serious men. Kleist "felt wounded by it in my holiest depths. My one, my highest goal has sunk and I have none left." Nietzsche[10] comments: "When will men again have the natural feelings of a Kleist? When will they learn again to measure the meaning of a philosophy by their holiest depths?" Foucault is your usual dumb, pseudo-lib-

eral professor, a pseudo-intellectual, not a serious thinker such as Kleist or Nietzsche. So he welcomed nihilism's destruction of sanity (cf. Death in Venice and the more perceptive Aschenbach). Unafraid to face reality's nihilism, real intellectuals uphold intellect (liberalism, atheism, science) against the pious illusions of passion (morality, politics, philosophy, religion). Pseudo-intellectual (pseudo-liberal) trivialization of nihilist anguish, rightly noted by Bloom, informs contemporary academic fads -- hermeneutics, structuralism, deconstructionism, postmodernism, fads often enlisted in officially sanctioned professorial witch hunts against the unholy trinity ("racism, sexism, homophobia"). The hallmark of these endeavors is unwillingness to acknowledge the nihilism, the moral void, at the heart of their liberalism. Instead their intellectual and moral bankruptcy is palmed off as "liberating," "invigorating," "noble," and even "effective in contributing to the moral or cultural understanding."[11] What unmanly nonsense!

7. Nietzsche's pseudo-liberalism prefers the will to overpower truth (nihilism, liberalism) to truth. All passions "naturally" share this cowardice. As Nietzsche knew: Error is not blindness; error is cowardice!

8. Serious persecution of nihilism means closing all schools and burning all books. Can this be done by nations mortally infected by their need for technology (and/or "creativity")! Consider Rousseau's praise of the Caliph Omar's justification for burning the library of Alexandria: "If the books in the library contain things opposed to the Koran, they are bad and must be burned. If they contain only the doctrine of the Koran, burn them anyway -- they are superfluous."[12] Pseudo-liberals, as well as illiberals can advocate book-burning. Consider the end of Hume's Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding. Contemporary pseudo-liberal (academic) witch hunts are fired by the same anti-political political spirit, the source of "wars to end all wars," of a "respect for diversity" which is determined to destroy the only real diversity, that represented by the enemies of its "diversity." I again conclude from all this that the "last man" is not in our future. "Personkind," not mankind, yearns for its transformation into last men! Man is the ungrateful biped.

Nietzsche failed to see that his "Dionysus" (that is, the superman's willing of the eternal return of his will to overpower nihilism) is not the transcendence but the apotheosis of the Tarantula's bite, the spirit of revenge. Incorporating the spirit (*Geist*) of German idealism from Kant through Hegel to Nietzsche and Marx, "Dionysus" is the wrath of Ahab and Stavrogin, that "calm, cold, reasonable anger" of the passions bent

upon destruction of science (liberalism). "Dionysus" is passion rebelling against a reason liberating it to a freedom which is just a word for nothing else to lose. The last thing this virulent hatred will produce is last men!

So whatever happens to communism's evil empire, no man and no state will lack internal and external enemies. Politics will continue to be what it always was: the belligerent determination to empower (legitimate) one's bigotries, to ram them down the throats of one's enemies, by having them legislated into law and enforced by the police and the army.[13] Man will -- thank god! -- remain the ungrateful biped.

Chapter 20

The Case Against Liberalism: Nietzsche's Interpretation of the Jewish Instinct[1]

To Rabbi Itzok Meir Kaminer who preferred being beaten to death by the Germans to kissing the Christian cross.

> *How can one today still concede so much to the naivete of Christian theologians that one joins them in decreeing that the development of the notion of god, from `god of Israel,' from a political god (Volksgott) to the Christian god constitutes progress?*[2]

> *The mission of the Jews always was to bring a people (Volk) to reason.*[3]

Although Nietzsche welcomed the modern Jew's eagerness to end his nomadic existence, the eternal wandering of the *galut*, he believed that it arose from the weakening of the Jewish instinct.[4] The willingness to find a home in Europe, especially in Germany, followed upon Napoleonic destruction of the ghettos in which the exiled Jews had continued to await the messiah who would restore their political integrity by rebuilding their ancestral temple on its ancestral site in Jerusalem and by re-establishing the prescribed tribal sacrifices in it. Until that messianic restoration they chose to live in ghettos segregated from the (moral-political) abomination of gentile life. Millenia of persecution could not deprive what Shylock still called "our sacred nation" of its messianic zeal. Nietzsche considered it the goal of the Jewish instinct. By calling it an instinct he intentionally abstracted from Jewish piety. Instincts are shared by all animals; they do not distinguish men from beasts. Yet Nietzsche perceived instinct as central to human life:

> Every mistake in every sense is a consequence of degeneration of instinct, of the degeneration of the will: one could almost define what is bad in this way. Everything good is instinct.[5]

Proper instincts are acquired through millenia of brutal, tyrannic imposition of a morality which then becomes self-evident to those so educated: "Everything good is inherited: what is not inherited is imperfect, is a mere beginning."[6] The main human problem is to attain "the perfected automism of instinct -- this presupposition of every mastery, of every kind of perfection in the art of life."[7] Nietzsche prized the Jewish instinct as a more developed form of this mastery than that possessed by other European nations.[8] Characteristically Nietzsche finds this illiberal instinct's most revealing aspect in unconditional obedience to parents: "To honor father and mother and even in the depths of the soul to be obedient to their will." [9] Like most modern men, he abstracts, as he must, from the most essential element of Judaism, its piety. He discovers Judaism's core in the human experience central to it, not in the divine commandment which calls forth that experience.

Nietzsche believed that the Jews originally worshipped their exclusive tribal gods, and particularly their chief war god, whose main job was insurance of victory over enemies. The existence of those illiberal gods was disproven in the only way that gods could be disproven in that radically political world -- by military defeat and the subsequent destruction of their temples.[10] Prior to such catastrophe, the worth of one's gods appeared self-evident, subject to doubt only by madmen or fools. To its devotees, this piety had nothing to do with faith or belief. It informed a way of life in which the main concern -- the piety which unified the nation -- was experienced as self-evident truth. This political piety left no room for serious philosophic or scientific questions which became possible only with its discrediting by defeat and destruction of its temples. All moralities or religions informed by this liberal disestablishment naturally are experienced as faith in something questionable, something open to philosophic- scientific inquiry.

Once the pious certainties of the old tribal or civic piety are lost, politics no longer can escape "the police supervision of doubt," however much desperate partisans may cling to the self-evidence of some pious truth.[11] Most men dread the rootless, aimless lives forced upon them by the liberal discrediting of tribal-civic piety. This dread was responsible for the Jewish denial that destruction of their temple disproved the existence of their gods. Instead they claimed that their defeat and enslavement were god's way of testing or punishing them. In time

that same god would empower the messiah to re-establish their tribal sacrifices in their temple. However a god capable of effecting this miraculous resurrection of illiberalism, no longer could be merely concerned with his own people: "Formerly he had only his own people (*Volk*), his chosen people. Then he, just as his people, went wandering into foreign places ... that great cosmopolitan."[12] He became the one god of all men; the tribal piety of victorious Judaism was transformed into the monotheism of defeated Judaism:

> A people that still believes in itself, still has its own god. In him it reveres the conditions by means of which it is victorious, its virtues ... Such a god must know how to help and harm, must be able to be a friend and an enemy -- one admired both his good and his terrifying qualities. The *anti-natural* castration of a god to a god merely of good qualities would be undesirable here ... What would be the use of a god who was not even alive to the delightful *ardeurs* of victory and annihilation of enemies? ... To be sure, when a people is destroyed; when it feels the irrevocable disappearance of its faith in its future, its hope for its freedom ... then its god becomes a god for everyone, becomes a private person, a cosmopolitan. Formerly he represented a people (*Volk*), the strength of a people, everything aggressive and thirsty for power in the soul of a people: now he is merely the good god.[13]

Although victorious Judaism had one main war-god, it acknowledged that other peoples had their gods and it itself had various lesser gods.[14] This polytheism was a luxury which defeated Judaism no longer could afford. It desperately required an omnipotent god who could create *ex nihilo*, transforming ultimate political annihilation and degradation into salvation. Since this god could not be limited by anything outside himself, he must be the one omnipotent god. Beside him there is only the nothingness out of which he creates whatever he wills. Nietzsche interpreted that nothingness as the cosmic reflection of the emptiness experienced by Jews when defeat discredited their ancestral gods, the guarantors of their political integrity who defined their morality. In their radically political world that emptiness meant slavery or suicide.[15] However Jewish invention of omnipotent monotheism permitted them to interpret ultimate degradation, destruction of their temple in Jerusalem, as divine providence.

This desperate invention sprang from "the deepest political instinct (*Volks-Instinkt*), the toughest will to live which ever existed on earth."[16] That will's toughness sprang from realization that life is nothing for men deprived of their political integrity: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem!"[17]

In the rebirth demanded by that tenacious will to live illiberally, the Jewish mission no longer could be what it most wanted to be, that is, deeply tribal. Now it was compelled to be global, since divine omnipotence must control the whole universe. Otherwise it could not bring the Jews back to Jerusalem, transmuting defeat into victory. Obviously this new piety could be held only by blind, desperate faith in *ex nihilo* creation. Prior to destruction of their temple, Jews experienced no need for such faith. In their old polytheism, military virtue corresponded to the role played by the will to believe in monotheistic Judaism. The main work of the warriors also was the main work of their gods: destruction of enemies. Only with defeat did peaceful priests seem better than the warriors celebrated by the old warrior piety. For the omnipotent god valued humility and meekness over manly pride. The priests who interpreted that deity's will naturally were preferred to those now defeated warriors.[18]

Written by those priests, the Bible, from Nietzsche's point of view, is the record not of what actually happened, but of what omnipotent monotheism needed to transform defeat into victory.[19] After the defeat of one's tribal or civic gods, the alternative to this falsification of one's past is political suicide or slavery. Confronted with this alternative the Jews, according to Nietzsche, chose a life grounded in lies. Nietzsche interprets this preference as the ground of all subsequent (liberal) politics, a politics separated from religion:

> The Jews created that miracle of an inversion of values thanks to which life on earth has acquired a new and dangerous charm for a few millenia ... The slave-rebellion in morality begins with them.[20]

Nietzsche's Jesus drew the radically apolitical consequences of the liberal discrediting of the old polytheism. Open to everything because nothing is foreign to him, he has lost the capacity to experience the distinction at the heart of serious politics, the distinction between friends and enemies, between his own and what is hostile to it.[21] Only Israel's original warrior piety justified that distinction by which serious politics stands or falls.

For Jesus, no enemies -- and therefore no politics -- exist because military defeat had deprived his people of the pious ties which made them a people, not a group of random, independent individuals. Jesus' liberalism, his radical lack of discrimination, precluded awareness of any crucial distinctions between man and man and even between god and man, heaven and earth: the kingdom of heaven is here and now within oneself as soon as one becomes alive to the consequences of military defeat for the old political piety.

Nietzsche's Jesus refuses to discriminate between slave and free, male and female, Jew and gentile, wisdom and ignorance, life and death, noble and base:

> The glad tydings are precisely that opposites no longer exist; the kingdom of heaven belongs to the children; the faith which makes itself heard here is no faith obtained through struggle -- it is here, it exists from the beginning; it is, as it were, an infantilism which has retreated into the spiritual ... a retarded puberty caused by degeneration ... This kind of faith is not angry, does not condemn, does not defend itself: it does not bring `the sword' -- it cannot even imagine how it might one day be divisive. It does not prove itself, either by miracle or by reward and promise or even `by scripture': it itself is in every moment its own miracle, reward, proof, its `kingdom of god' ... It stands outside all religion, history, science, all experience of the world, all knowledge, all politics, all psychology, all books, all art -- its knowledge is pure foolishness precisely about the existence of such things ... Such a teaching cannot contradict. It cannot even grasp that other teachings exist or can exist.[22]

In a passage suppressed by his sister, Nietzsche describes Jesus as an idiot using the word in its ancient meaning according to which an idiot (*idiotes*) is a private person, a man with no tribal or civic gods -- and therefore no politics -- of his own.[23] Such people -- mere human beings or persons -- seemed slavish or infantile on the ancient polytheism's radically political horizon. To escape this idiotic fate, the Jews interpreted it as a temporary divine punishment which would be terminated when their messiah restored their political integrity by rebuilding their ancestral temple on its ancestral site in Jerusalem. In opposition to Jesus, the Jews did not see their recourse to monotheism as an end in itself. For them it was a means to restore their warrior piety. Unable to

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Some Christian or post-Christian form of monotheism, and with it the death of serious politics, has triumphed everywhere during the last two millenia. If isolated pockets of warrior piety exist today they are pitied as "backward" or "underdeveloped" peoples, that is, people whose "sexist," "chauvinist" or "racist" prejudices require replacement by Christian-liberal ideals. The Jews, and only the Jews, never were reconciled to this replacement. They remained aware of the terrifying emptiness of apolitical, cosmopolitan solutions. Nietzsche believed that the Jewish instinct constituted by this illiberal awareness prevented whole-hearted acceptance of any religious or secularized monotheism. For the Jews, monotheism never was more than a means to return to polytheism's serious (political) world.

Prior to what Nietzsche diagnosed as the dying of their radically political instincts, the Jews insisted upon living in ghettos segregated from the emptiness, the lack of seriousness, of Christian-liberal regimes. Unlike contemporary opponents of "segregation" or "discrimination" who denounce their ghettos, the Jews demanded ghetto segregation so long as their yearning for political regeneration had not lost its pious flame.

Nietzsche knew that the Jewish instinct always had been in danger of losing itself to liberalism's apolitical orientation. Both "rational" persuasion and horrible persecution joined to weaken that instinct's desperate clinging to its impossible goal. The weakening by persuasion never was as successful as it became after the American and Napoleonic "liberation" of the ghettos. However, Nietzsche insisted that it already had been responsible for the falsification of Jewish history in most of the Old Testament and all of the New Testament.[27] Since the destruction of the Temple, Judaism's hallmark has been the conflict between this alien tendency to interpret it as essentially apolitical and cosmopolitan and the Jewish instinct's subordination of monotheism to restoration of its old warrior piety. That alien, "rationalist" tendency to reject the depth of instinct linking Jews to their ancient polytheism never was stronger or more persuasive than in Spinoza, the founder of liberal democracy.

Nietzsche noted that Spinoza advised abandonment of the Jewish instinct precisely because monotheistic omnipotence cannot be limited by any morality, especially by the warrior piety which it was invented to restore: "How can Spinoza's position, his denial and rejection of all morality, be understood? It was a consequence of his theodicy!"[28] He defended omnipotent freedom's monotheism against limitation by any political -- and therefore exclusive -- piety.[29] More knowledgeable

about Judaism than most modern Jews (and gentiles), he identified it heart and soul with tribal, not cosmopolitan, piety.[30] Moreover he agreed with the Jews that morality or politics (which the Jews, like all illiberals, did not distinguish) is possible only in a polytheist world of warring political gods, not in a monotheist world of brotherly love:

> [Jesus' words] were spoken to men who were oppressed, who lived in a corrupt commonwealth on the brink of ruin, where justice was utterly neglected. The Christian doctrine inculcated just before the destruction of Jerusalem was also taught by Jeremiah before the first destruction of Jerusalem ... However Moses who did not write in times of oppression but -- mark this -- founded a well ordered regime ... ordained that an eye be given for an eye ... Jesus' and Jeremiah's teaching concerning submission to injuries is only valid in places where justice is neglected ... not in a well ordered regime.[31]

Although Spinoza agreed that genuine morality was possible only in the world of the old Jewish warrior piety, the dread of liberalism's infantilism was weak or non-existent in his soul. This weakness is responsible for the lack of depth discerned by Nietzsche in Spinoza and in all men unable to grasp why clinging desperately to Jewish messianic hopes, however impossible their realization, reveals a rare awareness of the human problem, rare at least in regimes founded on cosmopolitan (apolitical) principles. Nietzsche interpreted Jesus' infantilism as the radicalization of this shallowness.

Spinoza knew that serious political-moral cares were possible only under the ancestral Jewish piety. Consequently he also knew that the Jewish instinct, a political will *par excellence*, required subordination of all life to its warrior piety. This piety necessarily hated scientific-philosophic cosmopolitanism for the same reason that it hated Christianity, the pacifist way of Jesus' infantilism.[32] Spinoza's attachment to his form of (scientific) cosmopolitanism was responsible for his attempt to liberalize, that is, de-politicize, Judaism. The heart of his liberalization has been elimination of the Jew's instinctual yearning for regeneration of his ancestral gods who had been discredited by destruction of their temple in Jerusalem.[33] Like all contemporary "liberation" movements, Spinoza's liberalism insisted that there was private, apolitical morality as well as political morality. Indeed Spinoza and those "liberators" teach the primacy of the private -- of individual rights -- over political duties.

Spinoza never could persuade genuine (orthodox) Jews to abandon their messianic fervor and, therefore, their ghettos. The alternative was too degrading for their radically political yearning. The centrality of that yearning links (orthodox) Judaism with Socratic-Platonic thought, however implausible this linkage may seem to most "platonic" scholars. Like the mission of Nietzsche's chief enemy, Socrates (or Plato), "the mission of the Jews always was to bring a people to reason." In the decisive sense, as Nietzsche realized, this mission is more Socratic than Nietzschean. But Socrates both needed and fought the warrior piety for whose restoration Jews alone always longed. He saw that this piety, in his case his ancestral Athenian polytheism, gave his philosophy its direction and its seriousness.

The heart of Nietzsche's opposition to modern classical scholarship is his awareness of its blindness to Socrates' deep need for the Athenian piety which condemned him to death. Lacking, as moderns do, the narrow political piety provided by birth into illiberal regimes, modern scholars cannot be alive to Socrates' debt to what Nietzsche called his herd instinct.

Nietzsche rightly notes that the herd instinct always provides herd members with one central care, however differently that care may be interpreted in different bestial or human herds. That care concerns the right way of life, how best to live -- in short, the moral-political care. Generally this care is informed by the regnant orthodoxy (instinct) of one's particular herd. Socrates turned that care into a question whose answer was not self-evident (as it usually is to champions of the going orthodoxy). He spent his life trying unsuccessfully to answer that question. In this crucial sense, his life served his (Athenian) herd instinct by trying to answer its main question. Nietzsche insisted that all pre-Nietzschean thought served the instinct of the thinker's herd: the conscious or unconscious aim of "the famous wise men" was to answer the main question of their respective herds, the question of how best to live. The heart of pre-Nietzschean thought was political (and therefore moral or religious), not liberal.

The primacy of politics and the political question cannot be established by any philosophic-scientific inquiry. Its primacy is revealed by the same herd instinct which inspires the faith that men live in a world which exists independently of their experience of it. No rational inquiry can show that the so-called "external" world exists independently of one's experience -- or, for that matter, that one's "internal" self possesses this independent reality.

Socrates saw that the herd instinct which reveals an independently existing world and self is not democratic. It presents a (aristocratic) hierarchy of concerns or questions, primarily the moral-political question. Denial of this question's priority means denial of the whole political (or herd instinct) orientation, including the faith that one's "internal" self and the "external" world exist independently of one's experience.

That apolitical denial of the herd instinct orientation is at the heart of Nietzsche's nihilism. The nihilist denies that anything (this table, that tree, his self, the law of contradiction, etc.) is anything but his experiences, mere impressions as Hume called them. There is nothing "in" things (or "behind" or "above" them) which gives them a reality apart from immediate experience -- whether this experience be that of a fish, an infant or a Socrates. The herd instinct faith in such an existence (apart from experience) is a faith in "beings," things which exist in themselves, as opposed to what might be called mere "things" (or nothings) without any intrinsic being. Nihilists recognize only things or nothings but no beings. The first and last sentence of Stirner's The Ego and its Own summarizes the nihilist, and therefore apolitical, core of Stirner and Nietzsche: "I have based my reality on nothing" ("*Ich hab' mein Sach' auf Nichts gestellt*").

Aware that he himself was radically nihilist, indeed "Europe's first perfect nihilist," Nietzsche insisted that truth led to despair not to messianic redemption or to happiness:

> Those who really have looked into the heart (*Wesen*) of things -- they are the knowers ... Knowledge kills action, action needs the veil of illusion ... Real knowledge, insight into the horrible truth outweighs any motive for action.[34]

Realization of the horrible (because radical apolitical) truth destroys life, a life grounded in the illusions of common (or political) sense, the instincts of one's herd: "Not doubt but certainty drives men insane ... We all fear the truth."[35] Nietzsche invented the superman, his version of Israel's messiah, to appease the same fear of truth's radically idiotic horror which compelled the Jews to live on messianic hope.

Nietzsche interpreted both Socratic questioning and Jesus' infantilism as consistent efforts to appease that politically inspired fear of truth. Socratic questioning is political at heart because it is informed by the priority of the herd instinct's main concern. The Socratic questioner understands himself as enslaved to the herd whose instincts give meaning and direction to his questioning.

Nietzsche commanded a rare insight into the deeply illiberal orientation of the Socratic enterprise. In terms of the cave image in Plato's Republic (511D-517C), nobody, including Socratic philosophers, ever really leaves the cave to look directly at the sun, the idea of the good. The Socratic's relation to that real, self-subsisting good is guaranteed by his faith or trust in its reality, a faith inspired by his herd instinct. The instincts of his herd teaches every herd member that his chief concern is securing what is good for him. Insofar as he remains a pious herd member and not a questioning, Socratic herd member, he wholeheartedly accepts some form (there sometimes are opposing forms) of his regime's regnant orthodoxy about what is good for him. Far more than modern "liberated" Jews, Nietzsche knew that Judaism's deepest stratum, its messianic longing, is for a regime in which Jews again can be pious herd members in this sense.

Although Socratic herd members question the goodness of their herd's illiberal orthodoxies, they never forget what they owe to their herd. It is responsible for their fundamental conviction, the faith that the question of the good life is the crucial question and, consequently, that political philosophy is not one "field" or "discipline" among many. For the same reason politics is central and not one human activity among many. To demote it to one of many essentially equal human or "cultural" activities is to reduce the question (or care) at the core of serious politics, the question of how best to live, to a merely liberal question of "ethics" (or political or moral science) among other equally important questions or "cultural fields" such as science, humanities, stamp-collecting, religion, etc. On a Socratic horizon, nihilism is precisely this liberal demotion, not the throwing of bombs or the assertion that nothing exists or the denial of external and internal reality. For these more sensational things are mere consequences of that demotion. Both Socratic questioning and Jewish messianic hopes require rejection of this demotion. Both require membership in a sacred political, and therefore illiberal community. The hallmark of such a community is the identity of politics, religion and morality in it. There can be no Aristotelian division of moral and philosophic virtue or liberal opposition between private and public or political morality. Such divisions or oppositions presuppose that men have a life -- their most important life -- apart from the sacred ties of birth linking them to their tribes or cities. The necessary, if not sufficient, condition of being either Socratic or Jewish is membership in a community whose warrior piety precludes those divisions or oppositions.

Without the faith inspired by one's herd instinct, men (and beasts) are nihilist. Socrates owed his escape from nihilism to his rootedness in his Athenian herd whose goodness he questioned and who finally killed him for that questioning. In this sense his worst enemy (the Athenians who killed him) was also his best friend.

Socratic thought resembles the original Jewish political piety for which birth, familial-political rootedness, determines whether one is divine or human or a mixture of both. Contrast this emphasis on birth with Genesis (3:22) where god, agreeing with the serpent, complains that Adam has "become as one of us" (gods) because Adam's disobedience made him knowledgeable about good and evil. Here being or becoming a god has nothing to do with birth. Divinity's core is the apolitical, immoral resolve to defy the authority ("god") dominant in one's herd. The resultant knowledge is not of some moral truth or reality outside of one's own will, as Socrates, on the basis of his herd instinct faith, believed the true good is. Socrates questioned the claim that the Athenian gods constituted that ultimate, independently existing source of morality; he did not question the Athenian faith that such a source, the idea of the good as he called it, existed even if it were impossible to grasp adequately.

Genesis' knowledge of good and evil is in reality the radically liberal will to be free and independent, to recognize no moral authority outside of one's own nihilist will, a will limited quite literally by nothing. No wonder that the apotheosis of this apolitical willfulness is the biblical god's creation of all reality out of nothing.

Because he is nihilist will, Genesis' god constitutes rejection of politics and political privilege, the privileges of birth, common to Socrates and his pious Athenian accusers. He has no parents, no family or herd out of which he was born. No herd instinct faith guides his creation *ex nihilo*. He must create and think *ex nihilo* because he experienced no birth or perhaps, as Mephisto in Goethe's Faust suggests, he is born *ex nihilo*, "that great cosmopolitan" of Nietzsche's Antichrist. His omnipotent liberalism can do anything except what the defeated Jews, in their desperation, required of him: restoration of their ancestral polytheism in their Jerusalem temple -- the earthly not the heavenly Jerusalem!

Anybody can become a biblical god as god and the serpent define divinity in Genesis (3:22). It has nothing to do with birth, with being born into an exclusive sacred tribe or city. The sole prerequisite is nihilist liberation from such exclusive ties and from the "racist", "sexist" and "chauvinist" "prejudices" created by the bellicose gods sanctifying

those ties. This biblical divinity liberates men from more than the piety into which Socrates was born and whose worth he questioned. Genesis' god negates the very possibility of Socratic questioning. Nietzsche rightly insisted that Socratic thought, his radically political philosophy, is rooted in faith in the instincts of his Athenian herd. That thought is meaningless, if those instincts are illusory. Consequently the job of Socratic or political philosophy in any herd is twofold: 1) to investigate the validity of that particular herd's answer to the question of the good life but also 2) to protect the instincts of that herd against nihilist rejection of their validity. The second requirement would make Socrates champion the this-worldly Jewish messianic enterprise against Christianity's merely heavenly Jerusalem. For the same reason it sparks Nietzsche's ultimate preference for Christianity over Judaism.

Nietzsche noted that modern intellectuals, whether humanists or scientists, usually are democratic and egalitarian, opposed to discriminatory, aristocratic emphasis on the privileges of birth. In this spirit Hitler once complained that the Kaiser was born with the Iron Cross around his neck, while ordinary soldiers had to risk their lives to earn it. Similar complaints often are levelled against England's queen. Such rejections of the rights of birth would eliminate not only Prussian kaisers and English queens, but all Socratic (non-nihilist) thought. They would reduce life to an apolitical reality in which nothing has a being of its own and, most importantly, in which no moral limits exist except by tyrannic *fiat*. For one learns of those limits by birth, by being born into a particular (illiberal) herd whose instincts supply the faith that they exist. Just as not everyone could become a god of Greek mythology (as distinct from Genesis' god) so not everyone can become Socratic. In both cases the prerequisite is birth, being piously rooted in the instincts of one's particular herd. Precisely this particular, political rootedness is undermined in modern liberalism. Yet this essential particularity is the most Socratic aspect of the Platonic problem of participation, the question of the relation of particulars to universals or ideas.

Radically political, the Platonic problem of participation cannot seriously arise in the souls of citizens of modern regimes in which the legitimacy of politics' exclusive ties is derived from universal ties or rights (the rights of man, for example). (Orthodox) Jews always have prayed for a messiah to redeem them from the nihilism of these (gentile) regimes. This messianic yearning made them alive to the Socratic-Platonic problem of participation as the central question of human life and not merely as an academic problem in so-called "platonic" scholarship.

For Socrates, even a man's loftiest metaphysical-theological flights remain bound to the instincts of his particular herd: science or philosophy always is herd philosophy. Refusal to acknowledge this illiberal enslavement as the necessary condition of one's investigations is nihilist. Far from abandoning inquiries into being or the universe, the philosopher's dependence upon the instincts of his herd, his common or political sense, reveals the only non-nihilist way to maintain those inquiries. Socrates did not renounce non-nihilist metaphysics or science when he insisted upon political philosophy's priority. Socratic emphasis on the moral-political cares of one's herd, his radically political approach to life, is meant to rescue life from conscious, but more often unconscious, nihilism. Nietzsche has just this rescue mission in mind when he observes that "we all fear the truth."[36]

This Socratic rescue mission is fueled by that fear of truth. Nietzsche sees execution of the same mission as the job of Israel's messiah whose success would restore the necessary condition of Socratic philosophy; rootedness in a tribe or city whose piety sanctifies only that rootedness. In this crucial -- but usually overlooked -- sense, an "unenlightened" ancient Israeli or Zulu warrior was more Socratic than a Jesus, a Spinoza, a Marx or a Nietzsche.

Genuinely Jewish hopes always were for messianic redemption in which Jews again could be seriously political and not be degraded to the apolitical level of ancient, medieval or modern "individualists." On their horizon, Jesus' crucifixion was a scandal precisely because it pointed to an other-worldly, liberal redemption of Jews as individuals and not to the political redemption to be effected by Israel's messiah.[37] Worship of a crucified "messiah" sanctified the split which Israel's messiah was meant to eliminate: the split between private and public, conscience and society, political and private morality. More decisively it sanctified the priority of private or apolitical morality or religion, thus degrading war and politics to at best necessary evils.

Socrates would agree with Nietzsche that in regimes in which this priority (of the private or apolitical) determines morality "the mission of the Jews always is to bring a people to reason." However Nietzsche knew that Socratic (political) reason is not Nietzschean (apolitical) reason. Socratic reason can exist seriously only in men rooted by birth in a warrior piety not available in liberal regimes. In these regimes the strongest link to Socratic thought would be something akin to messianic Judaism's impossible yearning, the homesickness for an exclusively political regeneration, the yearning responsible for Emma Bovary's suicide.

The reason to which Judaism forces men, if they can be made alive to its real message, is a harsh, unwelcome ordeal both for Jews and gentiles. It is nothing less than the question whether life is worth living after the discrediting of illiberalism's warrior orientation. Would not suicide have been better for Jews (and for all illiberal peoples) after their temple was destroyed? Little more than the power of the sub-human craving for mere life at any price, a passion shared by all beasts, militates against suicide, when the sole living choice is between impossible messianic hopes (Jews) and some infantile "life- style" (liberals). It surely is no accident that this craving's power is apotheosized in Spinoza's omnipotent god whose hegemony means the natural right to self-preservation of anything powerful enough to maintain itself, however infantile it may be.[38]

The Jews have two important days of mourning; one generally known, the other unknown, to gentiles. The aim of *Yom Kippur*, the individual asking his omnipotent god to forgive his sins, is readily intelligible to liberals; *Tishah b'Ab* (the ninth of *Ab*) is not. For it is a day of national, not personal, mourning, a day when Jews mourn the catastrophe which compelled them either to die politically or to live on impossible hopes. On that day dirges are sung mourning the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. If monotheism by its very nature cannot restore serious politics, *Tishah b'Ab* actually is a day of mourning for the destruction of the Jewish people. Nor is its message of doom limited to Jews! In a world dominated by the nihilism responsible for monotheism, *Tishah b'Ab* is a bitter reminder to non-Jews that their life too lost its seriousness, that is, its political core, with the destruction of the old polytheistic world.

Since nothing goes more against the grain than *Tishah b'Ab's* message, it does not receive the publicity among political liberals accorded to *Yom Kippur*. That message is given by Zarathustra's prophet or truth-sayer (*Wahrsager*), "the proclaimer of the great weariness:"

> Everything is empty, nothing makes any difference ... nothing is worthwhile, the world is meaningless, knowledge strangles ... To be sure we have harvested, but why did all fruit turn rotten and brown for us? ... Verily we have become too weary even to die; so we are still awake and continue to live – in tombs![39]

Zarathustra's truth-sayer also gives the reason for his nihilism: "Everything was," that is, genuine politics which alone makes life seri-

ous and not infantile "fun" once was -- in ancient, illiberal regimes. It no longer exists in modern, liberal regimes where politics is derived from individual will, government from the consent of the governed. The pacifist goal of such regimes can only be something akin to a marxist classless society in which politics and the state wither away. Once that occurs individuals will be free to live as they -- as individuals and not as citizens -- please. On this apolitical horizon the individual's arbitrary whim determines whether to live seriously or playfully, since, apart of whim or "taste," nothing in this world is inherently "choiceworthy."[40]

Aware that modern "liberation" movements spark this elimination of politics and therefore of seriousness, Nietzsche could not but honor the tenacity with which messianic Judaism had clung to its dream of political regeneration in spite of refutation (by apolitical reasoners) and persecution. It was the quixotic last stand of illiberalism in an essentially liberal and therefore infantile world. Prior to what Nietzsche rightly diagnosed as the modern decay of the Jewish instinct, nothing could compel Jews not to grieve for what they had lost on *Tīshah b'Ab*; nor could anything reconcile them to the finality of that loss. Life is hopeless both for them and for Socratic (political) philosophers, if truth is on the side of Zarathustra's truth-sayer rather than with Israel's messiah. Nietzsche's rejection of that warrior messiah and his attack on Socrates both spring from the same roots or apolitical lack of roots.

Nietzsche knew that this lack of roots precludes thoughtfulness (as distinct from mere cleverness). Serious thought, that is, Socratic or political philosophy, is impossible in liberal regimes for the same reason that it is impossible in the god and serpent of Genesis (3). No wonder that Nietzsche saw the highest form of life, the superman's, as something akin to child's play, an activity recalling the infantilism ascribed by him to Christianity's messiah.[41] Abhorrence of that infantilism was responsible for the medieval Jew's militant refusal to accept Shylock's fate. No Shakespearean character - indeed no character in all literature - suffers a more degrading fate. Rather than accept life at that price, the medieval Jew fought to the death the crusaders intent upon his conversion. When armed resistance was no longer possible, he killed his family and then himself.

Consider the magnificent resolve of the Jews of Mainz, one of many such communities, recounted in Solomon bar Simson's Chronicle of the First Crusade:

When the people of the Holy Covenant, the saints, the fearers of the Most High, saw the great multitude, a vast horde of crusaders, as the sand upon the seashore, they clung to their Creator. They donned their armor and their weapons of war, men and boys alike, with Rabbi Kalonymos, the son of Rabbi Meshullan at their head ... The crusaders surged in like a streaming river until finally Mainz was completely overrun from end to end..The Jews armed themselves and they advanced toward the gate to fight the murderers. The two sides fought against each other around the gate but as a result of their transgressions the enemy overpowered them and captured the gate. The hand of the Lord rested heavily on His people and the Christians assembled against the Jews to exterminate them ... When the people of the Sacred Covenant saw that the Heavenly decree had been issued and that the murderers had defeated them, they all cried out together - old and young, maidens and children, menservants and maids - to their Father in Heaven. They wept for themselves and for their lives and proclaimed the justness of the Heavenly judgment, and they said to one another: 'Let us be of good courage and bear the yoke of the Holy Law, for the enemy can only murder us by the sword and death by the sword is the lightest of deaths' ... All of them declared willingly and wholeheartedly: 'After all things, there is no questioning of the ways of the Holy One, blessed be His Name, Who has given us his Torah and has commanded us to allow ourselves to be killed, in witness to the Oneness of His Holy Name' ... Then in a loud voice they all cried out as one: 'We need wait no longer, for the enemy is already upon us. Let us hurry and offer ourselves as a sacrifice before God ... There is none like our God into whom it would be better to offer our lives.'

The women girded their loins with strength and killed their own sons and daughters and then themselves. Many men also mustered their strength and slaughtered their wives and children and infants. The most gentle and tender of women slaughtered the child of her delight. They all arose, man and woman alike, and killed one another. The young maidens, the brides, and the bridegrooms looked out through the windows and cried out in a loud voice: 'Look and behold, O Lord,

questionable, is no less illusory than the fascination with technology or creativity inspired by Platonic-Nietzschean nihilism.

Heidegger's Being is an unwelcome disruption of ordinary decent moral-political life whose hallmark is illiberal unwillingness to face the Nothing which, for Heidegger, obfuscates Being. I do not know why Heidegger insists on a Being behind the Nothing. Like Nietzsche, if for different reasons, he is unwilling to acknowledge the nihilist truth promulgated by Schopenhauer and by Wagner who set Schopenhauer's radical atheism to music. The need for a Being, however mysterious or questionable, blinds Heidegger, as it blinded Plato and Nietzsche, to reality's nothingness. To be sure, Heidegger's *Gelassenheit* is no easy "letting being be;" it is an act of will, the iron determination to overpower the all-too human need responsible for Platonic-Nietzschean "anthropology." My only quarrel with Heidegger is not with the desperation of his *Gelassenheit*. It is with his interpretation of the experience of the Nothing as an experience of the abandonment of thought by Being in the history of metaphysics. I see no grounds for positing any being at all!

In a nihilist universe, nothing -- and only nothing! -- gives anything a non-arbitrary being or identity. The insight into reality's nihilism was as obvious to intelligent cave men as it is to intelligent contemporaries. This liberal insight defines intelligence (and the genuine intellectual), since to be intelligent means to see reality for what it is. There is no history of being because there is no being! The historicism of Nietzsche's willed eternal return and of Heidegger's history of Being, no less than Plato's ahistorical Good, rest upon inability to perceive that nothing exists but empty thoughts, perceptions or experiences, impressions as Hume called them. This realization of reality's emptiness generally sparks the desperation shared by Nietzsche, Heidegger and radical modern politics (nazi-communist). It is no accident that Heidegger never officially resigned from the nazi party and, in 1953, still spoke of "the inner truth and greatness of this movement (namely the confrontation of global technology and modern man)."[5] Radical nazis and communists are driven by the horror of this confrontation with nihilism.

Karl Löwith catches this horror in his discussion of Heidegger's nazism:

> The spirit of national socialism was not so much concerned with the national and the social but much more with that radically private resoluteness which rejects any discussion or

> mutual understanding because it relies wholly and only on itself ... At bottom all its concepts and words are the expression of the bitter and hard resoluteness of a will asserting itself in the face of its own nothingness, a will proud of its loathing for happiness, reason and compassion.[6]

The fanatic because impossible will to will, this nothing desperately resolved to be more than nothing whatever the cost, also is responsible for the trivial contemporary fascination with technology (sciences) and creativity (humanities). Nauseated by this global hegemony of nihilist triviality, the rule of Nietzsche's "Last Man," Nietzsche and his only student, Heidegger, were driven to their desperate, ultimately impossible, final solutions or questions. However opposed these efforts are, both share the desperation inspired by the confrontation of man's moral-political passions with nihilism, the realization that those illiberal passions are as meaningless as everything else in reality's void. In this crucial sense, Krell rightly notes the appropriateness of the design of the original German volumes which "printed merely the two names heidegger and nietzsche on the spine of the books ... no one could tell which was the author and which the title."

Chapter 22

The Case Against Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness: Mann's Tristan

> *I am convinced that intelligence (Geist) and art do not come from victorious but from broken natures; also that there can be no practical application, no actualization (Verwirklichung). There is only form and thought. This is a realization that you do not yet find in Nietzsche or he hid it. His blond beast, his writings on education always are still dreams about unifying intelligence and power ... A man may deceive himself about this as long as he can. When he can no longer do so, the end has come."*[1]

> *... I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent ... Christ crucified, unto the Jews a scandal and unto the Greeks foolishness.*[2]

Benn's statement indicates the impossibility which Nietzsche quixotically strove to overcome. His will to power doctrine is the will to overpower the nihilism which he and Benn found at life's core. Unlike Benn, Nietzsche was moved by the determination to overcome nihilism, to make reality more than mere thoughts and feelings. This fanatic resolve informs Nietzsche's opposition to Schopenhauer and to Wagner who set Schopenhauer's nihilism to music. Wagner's Tristan confirms Benn's insight: love, any desire for anything is an illusion. The despair created by this liberal realization informs the Tristan

recording by Carlos Kleiber.[3] In contrast to Furtwängler's heroic rendition, Kleiber captures the opera's hopelessness.

Gregory Sandow's review rightly notes:

> The climax of the prelude affects me as much as it does because it comes as wave piled on wave, with no relief, no pause to gather more energy, no respite of any kind; and yet it sounds not relentless, but only overwhelmingly sad. Kleiber seems to see the opera not as a grand tragedy of cosmic love, but instead as a pathetic story of two people who are miserably unhappy.[4]

Awareness of the human implications of Schopenhauer's nihilism is responsible for the overwhelming sadness conveyed by Kleiber.

In Zarathustra's chapter on the Magician, Nietzsche showed Wagner, as Kleiber does, shorn of heroic aspiration by the burden of reality's nihilism. Coming upon the Magician, whose liberal music strikes the soul's nihilist depths, Zarathustra finds no nobility:

> He found a trembling old man with glazed eyes ... The miserable wretch did not seem to notice that someone was with him. Instead he kept looking around with pathetic gestures, like one abandoned and forsaken by the whole world.[5]

Wagner lacked the intellectual honesty to discern the nihilism at his core. In an unpublished fragment from the time of Zarathustra, Nietzsche notes why Wagner preferred uplifting interpretations of his work to the overwhelming sadness found by Nietzsche and Kleiber:

> The highest courage of the knower shows itself not where he inspires wonder and terror ... but where he must be experienced by the nonknower as superficial, low, cowardly and trivial.

Nihilism is nothing far-fetched or hard to grasp, although its emptiness makes acceptance difficult. It is the simple realization that nothing exists to endow anything with a permanent, non-arbitrary identity or being: nothing prevents anything from changing (or being changed) into anything else or into nothing. Whether such changes are spontaneous (as in Kafka's Metamorphosis) or technologically induced

is not important. In a nihilist reality no security exists against anything happening at any time.

Tristan's main conflict is between awareness of reality's nihilism, embodied in Spinell, a tortured novelist, and the solid self-satisfaction of the anglophile, Klöterjahn. Spinell hates Klöterjahn, his buxom mistress and his robust son. He loves the frail, dying Gabriele Eckhof whom he refuses to recognize as Klöterjahn's wife and Klöterjahn Jr.'s mother. He hates Klöterjahn for marrying her, degrading her soul "which belonged to beauty and to death" by forcing upon it "life and ugliness."

In nihilism's emptiness, the only honest object of attraction is death, nothingness: genuine beauty means unhappiness and destruction while life, happiness, and success are repellent. Spinell and Gabriele celebrate that beauty when he persuades her to defy medical advice and play Wagner's Tristan. In its *Liebestod* they discover what Hanno, the last of the Buddenbrooks, instinctively knew: love of death is at the heart of all desire. Blinded by mankind's almost universal intellectual cowardice, the unwillingness to face reality for what it unfortunately is, Klöterjahn flees to "stimulating" (a word dear to pseudo-liberal academics) illusions; "consciousness-raising." Never could he -- or anyone determined to realize moral-political goals be taught that his deepest passion is necrophilia.

Klöterjahn's intellectual dishonesty moves not only this ambitious businessman but all men -- except for insignificant exceptions such as Spinell, Aschenbach (Death in Venice) or Hanno (Buddenbrooks). It is responsible for the impossibility of liberal education, the liberation of one's mind to face truth's overwhelming sadness. Should that liberation surface -- and have the misfortune to be taken seriously! -- it necessarily triggers the violent indignation manifested by Klöterjahn against Spinell. Anger is fired by "stimulating" delusions springing from illiberal fear of intellectual honesty. The more these delusions are unmasked by dissemination of real education, the swifter indignation and hatred degenerate into fear and trembling, the terror responsible for the success of Cipolla, the sorcerer of Mario and the Magician (and of Zarathustra's Wagnerian magician).

Benn noted that this degeneration is the price of genuinely liberal education as distinct from pseudo-liberal propaganda's fortifying pabulum: " ... intelligence and art do not come from victorious but from broken natures." Destruction of Western man's moral fiber through authentic enlightenment sparks the horror in Mann's work (Buddenbrooks, Death in Venice, Tonio Kröger, Mario and the

Magician, The Magic Mountain, Doctor Faustus). It is the deepest dread of the twentieth century in which Western enlightenment becomes global: liberal democratic (Settembrini, Zeitbloom) fear of nihilist dictatorship (Naphta, Cipolla). Klöterjahn and Settembrini are not yet aware of that dread in themselves as Naphta, Aschenbach, Leverkühn, Cipolla and Hanno are.

This blindness permits Klöterjahn to denounce Spinell's necrophilia with a clear conscience. "There are laws against men like you! You are dangerous to everybody! You drive people crazy!" Klöterjahn refuses to believe that his wife's illness arises from her craving for death. He is convinced that medical science will provide a cure. Spinell knows better:

> She is dying, sir! And if she does not drown in your vulgarity, if in the end, in spite of everything, she raises herself from the depths of your degradation of her, if she passes away proud and blessed in the deathly kiss of beauty, that is my doing! ... Take my word for it, sir, I hate you, you and your child, as I hate life itself, that common sense, ridiculous yet victorious life that you represent, the eternal opponent and mortal enemy of beauty.

Spinell's love of death informs Mann's Reflections of an Unpolitical Man, his World War I attack on Western democratic naiveté and human rights in the name of Germanic pessimism, Wagnerian *Götterdämmerung*. Mann's post-Hitler support of democracy was vitiated by sympathy with the nihilism sparking the desperate politics of nazism and communism. In his 1938 essay, "A Brother," he remarks about Hitler: "A brother -- a rather unpleasant and mortifying brother. He makes me nervous, the relationship is painful to a degree. But I will not disclaim it."

If beauty emerges primarily from death and destruction, it surely is not lacking in nazism or in communism. The only consistent objection Mann could make to their carnage is the one his Spinell makes to Klöterjahn's degradation of Gabriele. Like that degradation, nazi-communist destruction is in the service of practical, political goals, "stimulating" illusions. Klöterjahn wants to transform Gabriele into a sensible wife and mother; Hitler and Lenin want to alter human nature according to their pseudo-liberal ideals. However different their goals, thoughtless -- that is, practical -- men will share Klöterjahn's revulsion

at Spinell's devaluation of human striving: "You drive people crazy!" On their horizon Spinell's death wish makes no sense.

From Nietzsche's standpoint, this death wish makes sense but a sense so degrading that it must be overcome whatever the cost. Lacking, as most men do, the intellectual honesty to confront reality's nihilism, Klöterjahn is not alive to Nietzsche's desperation, his fanatic resolve to overcome nihilism. Enchanted with the practical good sense of all things English, Klöterjahn shares Anglo-Saxon inability to grasp the grounds for the desperation common to Nietzsche and to radical politics (nazi-communist) fired by divination of nihilism's horror. Like that politics, like all genuinely self-conscious moral-political men, Nietzsche is determined to rescue reality from its inherent nihilism, to make something of life's nothingness.

Moved by realization of the impossibility of Nietzsche's enterprise and of all practical life, Spinell, like Schopenhauer and Benn, rejects all ambition as stupid, finding in Tristan's longing for death the only honest passion, the sole drive in harmony with reality's nihilism. Resenting the vast majority of mankind, Klöterjahn needs a world in which that honesty is obfuscated by illiberal fictions encouraging human striving. Remnants of this need for illusion reveal themselves in Spinell's writing to Klöterjahn instead of confronting him directly. This is made necessary by Spinell's feelings of inferiority:

> I cannot say that I despise you. I am honest. You are the stronger. In battle I have only the weapon of the weak, the tool of vengeance, intelligence and words, to set against you ... For this letter -- I am honest about it -- is nothing but an act of vengeance.

Spinell's feelings of inferiority have no place in his nihilist world. Inferiority (or equality or superiority) to be meaningful, require standards by which they may be measured in a non-arbitrary way. Such standards are needed to strengthen Klöterjahn's common-sense delusions, any practical man's devotion to his goals. Spinell's inferiority (or egalitarian or superiority) feelings, like Wagner's concealment of suicidal despair behind heroic posturing, reveal incomplete liberation from those illiberal delusions.

Imperfect liberation also is responsible for Spinell's passion to educate Klöterjahn's type, to bring them to genuine self-consciousness, although he perceives that education, as distinct from propaganda ("consciousness raising"), is precluded by their cowardice, their horror

of intellectual honesty. Their invincible stupidity sparks a fury in Spinell, compelling him to promulgate intellectual honesty as a binding, non-arbitrary duty for all. As if anything non-arbitrary or universally valid could exist in reality's nihilism! Thus he is driven to forget his own intellectual honesty (nihilism) by his hatred of intellectual dishonesty in others:

> The world is full of what I call the `unconscious type' and I cannot stand it, all these unconscious types! I cannot stand all this dumb, unknowing uncomprehending life and action, this world of infuriating naiveté around me! It tortures me, driving me irresistibly to explain, to articulate all existence, to bring it to self-consciousness so far as I can -- unconcerned whether the consequences are helpful or harmful, whether it brings relief or intensifies the pain.

Chapter 23

Literature After the Death of God: An Interpretation of Zarathustra's Dwarf and Tarantula[1]

Most contemporary literature is destructive.[2]

Nietzsche's understanding of literature emerges in the Zarathustra's chapter on poets. One of Zarathustra's disciples asks why he accuses poets of lying. At first he refuses to answer; he is not among those who may be asked their reasons. His experience -- the death of god -- precludes any reason in (or behind or above) it. Poets are liars precisely because their inability to face the death of god inspires their creation of the reasons, the thousand and one goals, for essentially meaningless experience. This inability arises from a desperate faith in "the people and its wisdom" which blinds the poets to the nihilist experience separating Zarathustra from those who still may be asked the reason for their experience. Nietzsche accuses all "the famous wise men," the pre-Nietzschean thinkers, of this blindness.

Pre-Nietzschean thought succumbed to the spirit of revenge sparked by the spirit of gravity. These spirits are the human (or poetic) reaction against the death of god, the experience robbing human life of substance. Personifying the all too human indignation against this robbery, these spirits are the paradigms for all poetic creations, that is, for all thought determined to blind itself to the death of god.

The spirit of heaviness or gravity is Nietzsche's arch enemy and devil, while the spirit of revenge has poisoned all mankind's thought.[3] Although bitten by the Tarantula, the personification of the strongest contemporary spirit of revenge, Nietzsche (or Zarathustra) does not seem to believe that he suffers much from its egalitarian poison. However the spirit of heaviness, personified by the Dwarf, admittedly

weighs him down like lead, preventing his ascent to the superman. The Dwarf prevents a truly liberal -- that is, liberating -- education by obfuscating the death of god. His illiberal spirit of heaviness is responsible for the superman's (not to speak of Nietzsche's) inability to liberate himself from the spirit of revenge.

The spirit of heaviness is what makes anything seem important, weighty, good. It is the spirit of matter or mattering in the expression: "This matters." The spirit of mattering makes things matter. Its role is similar to Plato's Good or Idea of the good which also makes anything matter or be good. Thus Plato's Republic (504D-509C) insists that the most important thing to know is the good. For the value of anything else hinges on that knowledge. This Good is, as it were, Plato's best friend, while the spirit of mattering, which plays a similar role in Nietzsche's thought, is Nietzsche's worst enemy, preventing his liberation from age-old popular superstition.[4]

In the first place, Nietzsche's spirit of mattering is a spirit *(Geist)* not a Platonic idea. *Geist* combines Platonic *thumos* (spiritedness, will, resolution, anger) with Platonic reason or intellect. Sometimes *Geist* is translated as "spirit;" sometimes as "mind" or "reason" as in Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind. It is both together but primarily will, spiritedness, or commitment. For the objects of Nietzsche's *Geist* do not exist in themselves (like Plato's Good); they exist solely in virtue of their being willed. *Geist* or mind is essentially creative anger or indignation, the determination of spiritedness to save desire by destroying reality and the science (reason) which knows it. Personified in Ahab's hatred of Moby Dick, spiritedness is determined to defend passion against liberal science or die trying. This spiritedness is the fire of Nietzsche's *Geist*, his superman's will to overpower nihilism, to conquer nature. Thus Nietzsche sees philosophy's worst error in Platonic invention of the absolute good. The conviction that a non-arbitrary standard of good or right exists apart from spiritedness' *(Geist's)* angry creativity arises from illiberalism's delusion, unawareness of the death of god.

The death of god or nihilism means that the whole world apotheosized by that delusion is non-existent. Faith in that world is informed by common sense or the herd instinct. Common sense inspires the illiberal faith that one is part of a world that exists independently of one's consciousness of it. Now common sense does not experience everything in that world as equally weighty. Its primary question concerns the good life, how one should live. Usually this question is answered, almost prior to its being raised, by some form of the morality dominant in one's civilization. Denying that any civilization can find a satisfac-

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philosophers of the future, to be permeated with this nihilist consciousness. But how can anything moral or political matter to those so permeated? Have they not burnt out of their souls the dwarfish will to matter whose illiberal illusions make anything matter? At rare moments, Nietzsche realized that a truly nihilist superman would have nothing to do with the rest of mankind.[8] However even then, his arch-enemy, the Dwarf, compelled him to imagine the superman's will as the striving to overcome nihilism. Yet, it is impossible to overcome nihilism if god is dead or, rather, non-existent.

Nietzsche feared that the nihilism informing his thought doomed his desperate hope for a new tragic morality, a global atheistic aristocracy. The experience of nihilism is radically apolitical precisely because it is radically atheistic. No world, that is -- no community large or small -- can exist without its god, its common or common sense basis for communication between the individuals in the community. Since experience of the death of god annihilates any individual or community, it offers no encouragement for any political -- that is, religious -- need. Consequently Nietzsche's passionate war against egalitarian leveling compelled him to subordinate all conscious life -- whose hallmark is the nihilist experience -- to the superman's unconscious, instinctual will to overpower that leveling.Only in this way can Nietzsche explain his deeply political bent in a nihilist world. Then that world would be merely the surface or conscious effect of an essentially unconscious, instinctual reality: "Every mistake in every sense is the result of degeneration of instinct ... all that is good is instinct ... all that is good is inherited; what is not inherited is imperfect, is merely a beginning."[9] Nietzsche's new gods -- the basis of community in his atheistic aristocracy -- must be deeply personal, unconscious, instinctual.

Moved by his political (religious) dependence on unconscious instinct, Nietzsche condemned the shallowness of the Socratic tradition's reliance on conscious reason as a guide to life. For the same reason, he saw his own campaign against democratic- socialistic hegemony primarily as a life and death struggle between irreconcilable instincts, not as a conflict which could be submitted to rational arbitration. In that merciless war, victory requires tyrannical breeding over millenia of aristocratic (and slavish) instincts on a global scale, no matter what the cost in human lives. This breeding will compel the aristocrat to experience his right to rule, and the slave his need to obey, as unconscious instinctual demands. Such demands make men deaf to the siren-song of Socratic questioning which must end in nihilism, once it gains the courage to confront its own reality. For Nietzsche, this deafness, the

"perfected automism of instinct" is "the presupposition of every mastery, of every kind of perfection in the art of life."[10]

Nietzsche believed that the twentieth century's world wars would determine whether the instincts shaping man's future would be aristocratic or egalitarian. He hoped for an aristocratic victory which would transform mankind into a global laboratory for breeding over millenia a few supermen, philosophers of the future, even if millions must be annihilated for this experiment's success. Nauseated by the strengthening of egalitarian instincts since the American and French Revolutions, Nietzsche sought to destroy their hegemony while there still seemed to be time. For he preferred mankind's destruction to that hegemony!

Nietzsche realized that his subordination of reason to instinct would be used for democratic-socialist ends by the levellers whom he despised. Their victory would elevate the egalitarian instincts which nauseated him. His war against them is a war of unconscious, "irrational" instincts. However Nietzsche, like all moralists, strives to make his preferred instincts seem as "rational" (communicable) as possible in order to attract the support of the vast majority whose common sense instincts preclude the experience of nihilism. Nietzsche knows that all founders of religions or moralities, the great tragedians, are liars who want their "noble lies" worshiped as gospel truth. In any case, he warns against those using his noble lie, the reduction of reason to instinct, to defend the Tarantula's poisonous lies. Obviously he would despise any contemporary Tarantula's will to racial, sexual or humanitarian liberation.

Nietzsche traced the Tarantula's democratic-socialistic instincts to the spirit of revenge, the slave's need for vengeance against his master. This need has motivated all human thought. Modern egalitarianism is only its most recent and most deadly form. Nietzsche's highest hope is that man may be delivered from this poison which, at bottom, is the intellectual cowardice preventing the experience that god is dead, that life is nothing but chaotic acts of consciousness. This cowardice's apotheosis was Plato's invention of the good in itself and the pure mind. The platonic Dwarf, the spirit of mattering, rebels against the nihilist reality of the human condition. The dwarfish will wants revenge against a liberal reality of aimless change, of chaotic, unrelated acts of consciousness.

The Tarantula is enslaved to the dwarf as spiritedness (moral indignation) is to desire. The Tarantula's implacable hatred and resentment, the "cold, reasonable anger" of Stavrogin and Ahab, aims to annihilate a reality which reduces the Dwarf, the personification of desire

-- any desire -- to zero. Mann's version of this murderous resentment against reality itself is Dionysus (Death in Venice), a more accurate portrayal of that apotheosis of the Tarantula than Nietzsche's. Unlike Nietzsche and other pseudo-liberals, Mann realized that passion enlightened by reason, far from ennobling life would degrade and destroy it. Mann knew as Nietzsche did not, that real intellectuals, men daring to be liberally educated, experience desire's unappeasable wrath against the intellect responsible for their liberation. That wrath is the Tarantula's essence, the illiberal determination to eradicate intellect and intellectuals.

The Tarantula is the Dwarf's means of preventing an awareness of life's nihilism. This obfuscation arises from the dwarfish need for faith in common or communicable goods. The most recent products of that need are the "last men," those contemporary "educators" who promulgate the illusion that their communized, humanitarian instincts are the key to happiness. However their Tarantula remains what she always was -- man's illiberal need to avenge himself against the nihilism of his own condition by falsifying it. In the so-called conquest of nature, man himself is the slave in futile rebellion against a master who is none other than his own reality. In this crucial sense, Nietzsche's rejection of conscious -- that is, nihilist -- self knowledge (in favor of unconscious instinct) is as much Tarantula poison as the democratic leveling opposed by him.[11] For that rejection springs from the Dwarf's will not only that life matter but that it matter eternally!

Any concession to the Dwarf is a concession to his main weapon, the Tarantula's spirit of revenge against a nihilist reality for which nothing matters. Why should anything matter to a man permeated with the death of god? The fact that Nietzsche's nausea at the levellers mattered so much to him reveals the truth in his admission that even he had been bitten by the Tarantula. The suffering created by that bite's poison, and not a radically atheistic will, compelled him to "stand over all life as its own heaven, its round roof," protecting it against the death of god. But, as he admitted, "there is revenge at work, revenge against life itself, when a profound sufferer takes life under his protection."[12] The superman's will to protect all life by willing its eternal return is sparked by his dwarfish suffering in the face of nihilism. The Tarantula's poison created by that suffering deprives Zarathustra of the courage to slaughter the Dwarf.

If education means the courage to face reality without illusion, it occurs only in a victorious confrontation with the dwarfish will to secure life against its inherent nihilism. Thus a genuinely liberal -- that is,

liberating -- education culminates in the beating to death of the Dwarf and his Tarantula:

> There is something in me which I call courage. Up to now this courage has beaten to death every discouragement for me. This courage finally commanded me to stand, my ground and say `Dwarf! You! Or I!' Courage best beats to death -- courage which attacks.[13]

The traditional liberal arts and their modern (and therefore more democratic) split into sciences and humanities lack the heart for this murderous enterprise.[14] Consequently humanists and scientists must be prevented from interfering with genuine education: "I would drive out of my ideal state the so-called `educated' just as Plato drove out the poets: this is my terrorism."[15] Their "education" infects men with the latest and most democratic form of the Tarantula's age-old illiberal poison, the faith in a common sense world in which and about which selves can learn and teach. The liberal realization that god is dead -- that nothing matters -- annihilates the existence of anything or anybody to teach or to learn! Insofar as modern literature is inspired by this realization it must be destructive; that is, it must destroy the Dwarf and his Tarantula.

Those Nietzsche despised as "the so-called educated" are incapable of this intellectual honesty as opposed to their contemptible need to bestow moral-political respectability on nihilism's horror. They naturally condemn honest (liberal) education as ridiculous or abhorrent. The same Heidegger who intended his nazi education to save Germany and the West also recognized why genuine literature is destructive of all such grovelling.

Chapter 24

Illiberalism or Liberalism?
An Interpretation of the Incommensurability of Ancients and Moderns

> *The highest courage of the knower shows itself not where he arouses wonder and terror -- but where he must be experienced by the non-knower as superficial, low, cowardly and unimportant.*
>
> -- Nietzsche

The incommensurability of ancients and moderns also has been described as a conflict. "Incommensurability" is more apt since the gulf separating the two camps is so immense that any meeting, even a hostile one, seems impossible. I leave aside the question whether "ancients" exist in modernity or "moderns" in antiquity. In this paper neither designation is meant primarily in a temporal sense. Rather they are meant to characterize the fundamental alternatives confronting thoughtful men at any time.

Ancients maintain that one's immediate awareness of anything is an awareness of its existence or nature which exists in itself apart from one's awareness of it. Lucretius or Aristotle assume that things send off sensible and intellectual images or "forms" of themselves which activate our sensory or mental capacities, causing us to see and think what exists independently of our thought and sight.[1] This ancient conviction is informed by the common sense faith of all men prior to reflection that they are part of a world which they can know but which exists apart from their knowing it. Faith in this common sense obviousness is the starting-point of ancient thought.[2]

Ancient thought's primary concern is given by the fact that common sense, far from regarding all matters as equally worthwhile,

stresses the primacy of the question of the good life, of how one should live. To be sure this question is answered prior to its even being raised. The range of permissible answers is dictated by the moral orthodoxies dominant in one's regime. Socratic-Platonic thought contended that philosophy first arises through questioning of these orthodoxies which dominate one's soul. Thus Socratic-Platonic thought agrees with the common sense priority of the moral or political question, although it doubts whether that question is adequately answered by any currently authoritative orthodoxy. It transforms the concern with how to live from dogmatic acceptance of authority into questioning of it. Thus Plato's Republic insists that the main thing to know is the Good. No matter what Socrates or Plato investigate from botany and astronomy to metaphysics and theology their guiding question always remains: Why is it good? What does it mean for a thing to be good? Even if some omnipotent god or scientist could control everything in the universe, he still would be confronted with the old Socratic question: What is the good of it?

Although other ancients also ground their investigations in common sense, they, unlike Socrates and Plato, do not make common sense's chief concern the focus of their thought. In this decisive sense, Plato is the ancient *par excellence* and, from a modern standpoint, Nietzsche rightly found philosophy's worst error in Plato's invention of the Good in itself and the pure mind which divines it.

Although other ancients usually are not so consistent as Plato in that their main focus is not on what common sense decrees to be central, they nevertheless begin with what seems true to common sense. No less than Aristotle or Plato, Lucretius believes that men and the other beings have unchangeable natures whose proper goals may be grasped by reason. They all assume a nature of things existing apart from human consciousness. It is this assumption which is rejected by the moderns.

Modernity arises from the conviction that what is perceived or thought has no existence independent of perceiving or thinking. One's immediate awareness of something is not an awareness of it as existing in itself, as the ancients believe. Ancient thought seeks to account for this independent existence -- which it takes to be obvious -- by positing a natural (ancient) or divine (medieval) order which cannot be altered by human will or interpretation. Modern rejection of either type of permanent constraint on human freedom (liberalism) is manifest in Spinoza's condemnation of theologians who teach nothing

> but speculations of Platonists and Aristotelians to which they have made Holy Writ conform; not content to rave with the Greeks themselves, they want to make the prophets rave also ... by laying down beforehand as a foundation for the study and true interpretation of the Scripture, the principle that it is in every passage true and divine.[3]

Spinoza knew that neither Plato nor Aristotle would have regarded every passage in any book, including the Bible, as true and divine. His remark is meant in another sense for it condemns the illiberal, anti-modern thrust of both ancient philosophy and medieval theology. Medieval piety claims to discern a god within or behind the Bible, sanctifying it and lending it an authoritative meaning independent of any human interpretation. Similarly ancient philosophy insisted that the objects of perception and thought reflect, point to or have within themselves a nature independent of their being apprehended. Plato, for example, claimed that the true good, the good by nature or the "idea" of the good, is opposed to or transcends the merely conventional goods of particular men and their communities. Illiberalism's ancient-medieval hegemony precludes unchecked human freedom or creativity.

On Spinoza's horizon, the ancient interpretation of nature is as prejudiced as the medieval faith in the Bible's sanctity. Both prejudge the crucial issue by positing beforehand an order where none exists:

> Those who do not understand the nature of things do not verify phenomena in any way, but merely imagine them after a fashion, and mistake their imagination for understanding. Such persons firmly believe that there is an order in things, being really ignorant both of things and their own nature ... as though there were any order in nature except in relation to our imagination. They say that God has created all things in order; thus, without knowing it, attributing imagination to God ... There are men lunatic enough to believe that even God takes pleasure in harmony ... mistaking for things the forms of their imagination.[4]

For the moderns, all order arises from human creativity. The fact that common sense's illiberalism makes men concerned with order, especially moral order, does not make this concern inherently worthwhile or true. Consequently Spinoza, the founder of liberal democracy, contends that, by nature, justice is no different for men than for fish, for

the insane than for the rational. For such distinctions are grounded not in nature or god, but in human interpretation:

> The natural right of the individual man is determined not by sound reason but by desire and power ... we do not here acknowledge any difference between mankind and other individual natural entities ... nor between fools, madmen and sane men ... natural right prohibits only such things as no one desires and no one can attain. It does not forbid strife, hatred, anger, deceit or any of the means suggested by desire. This we need not wonder at, for nature is not bounded by the laws of human reason which aims only at man's benefit and preservation; her limits are infinitely wider ... If anything in nature seems to us ridiculous, absurd or evil, it is because ... we want everything arranged according to the dictates of our human reason. In reality that which reason considers evil is not evil in respect to nature as a whole.[5]

The ancient starting point, the common sense faith in an objectively existing, ordered universe, arises from an illiberal instinct deeply rooted in men and beasts:

> It seems evident that men are carried by a natural instinct to repose faith in their senses and that without any reasoning, or even before the use of reason, we always suppose an external universe which depends not on our perception but would exist though we and every sensible creature were absent or annihilated. Even the animal creation ... preserve this belief in external objects ... But this universal and primary opinion of mankind is soon destroyed by the slightest philosophy which teaches that nothing can ever be present to the mind but an image or perception ... without any immediate intercourse between the mind and the object ... By what argument can it be proved that the perceptions of the mind must be caused by external objects? ... You can never find any convincing argument from experience to prove that the perceptions are connected with any external objects.[6]

It was this radical denial which awoke not only Kant but all moderns from their ancient slumbers. Modernity intends a total break with all prior philosophic-scientific (Greek) and religious (medieval)

thought. In the decisive respect, it does not build upon the illiberal foundations laid by the ancients or medievals. It wholly rejects those foundations, replacing them with its liberal, liberating starting point.[7] Consequently it is wrong to interpret the history of western civilization from Homer and Plato to Spinoza and Heidegger as a cooperative enterprise in which later thinkers build upon earlier insights. Nor is it a continuing dialogue between the great minds through their books. Only ancients could engage in cooperative enterprises since they share a common starting-point.

Plato, for example, could justifiably chide Aristotle for failing to observe that his main focus should not be astronomy or metaphysics but morality or political philosophy. For their common point of origin, common-sense, dictates this illiberal primacy. Failure to embrace that starting-point consistently is a concession, however unintentional, to modernity's liberalism. However that may be, this dialogue between Plato and Aristotle would be merely a family quarrel among thinkers bound to a common point of origin. No such bond exists between ancients and moderns, illiberals and liberals, or between the various moderns. This lack of community is reflected in Descartes' radical doubt, Leibnitz's windowless monads, Spinoza's contempt for the ancients, Hume's interpretation of cause and effect and the primacy of will over reason in Nietzsche and Kant.

The anarchic individualism fostered by this liberal lack of community is modernity's hallmark. "Individualism" is not quite the right word, since modernity means that nothing exists either communally or individually apart from human consciousness of it. No individual or self, not to speak of any common human nature, has independent existence. The best description of modernity is unlimited freedom, a freedom akin to that of the Christian god who, according to tradition, creates everything out of nothing. However that god does not create himself, while modernity's liberalism creates both its self and its world. If atheism means rejection of any objectively existing moral standards which rightfully limit freedom, modernity is radically atheist.

Christian rejection of a self-creating god is a remnant of what Spinoza despises as Platonic lunacy. For it means that at least one thing -- the most important thing -- has a being eternally independent of any human or divine creativity. To be sure, the Christian finds this independent existence not in the common sense world, but in another realm revealed through his religious faith. In this lower world he is far more open than the ancients to modernity's horror especially when his faith weakens or dies. Then he too confronts a liberal reality in which noth-

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This prejudice is evident in Kant's insistence, in spite of his objections to revolutions, that the universal sympathy of all decent men for the aims of the French Revolution "demonstrates the moral tendency of the human race."[15] For the revolution was made in the name of the same human rights to which Kant, persuaded by Rousseau, subordinated his earlier dedication to scientific experimentation.[16] It is no accident that the essay in which Kant praises the French Revolution's goals is called "Is the human race constantly progressing?" Kant wishes to believe in that progress since he "cannot suppress a certain indignation"[17] when he sees how little of man's history has been devoted to the actualization of those rights. Consequently he yearns for a Newton of morality whose history of mankind would demonstrate a necessary progress in the actualization of human rights in spite of all appearances to the contrary. This yearning links the pre- and post-Rousseauean Kant. Both are deluded by the pseudo-liberal need to believe in historical progress either of science or of morality.

Like all real liberals, Spinoza had no concern with history except to explain chaotic matters which of themselves offer no rational definitions such as the Bible or nature, especially those powerful natural drives enslaving men to moral or political things: "Scripture does not give us definitions of things anymore than nature does ... In interpreting scripture, we shall require a method very like that employed in interpreting nature from her history."[18] That method reduces all things to the mathematical, atheistic terms which define reality for modernity:

> There should be one and the same method of understanding the nature of all things ... I shall therefore treat of the nature and strengths of emotions according to the same method as I employed heretofore in my investigations concerning God and the mind. I shall consider human actions and desires in exactly the same manner, as though I were concerned with lines, planes and solids.[19]

History is the account of the genesis and development of all the deeply ingrained prejudices fostered by common sense. Consequently Spinoza sees no need for history in dealing with modern or genuinely

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Thus they share Kant's error, attempting to make something moral, a goal to be realized, out of modernity's liberalism.

Modern freedom does not need to be, nor can it be, realized in any past, present or future action. It is essentially introspective or "theoretical," an insight into the radical independence of one's thought and perception. It is the realization that the whole universe is nothing but one's immediate consciousness of it. No god or nature exists in or behind things lending them an existence independent of that consciousness. No future scientific experimentation or revolutionary action can alter this consciousness which is both the beginning and the end of liberal scientific endeavor. Genuine liberals, those making this awareness the cornerstone of their lives, have nothing left to do but contemplate their own freedom -- even from the bonds implied in a self existing by nature or god independently of their anarchic license.

Those pseudo-liberals whom superstition prevents from being satisfied with this contemplation will, like Nietzsche (superman) or Marx (classless society), keep a mere shadow of liberalism by relegating its realization to the future. But since any "actualization" is impossible, such postponement makes more political sense than American efforts at actualization in the present. For these efforts compel Americans to confront the impossible problems from which the Russians are saved by their indefinite postponement of modern freedom.

Americans are far more sensitive than Russians to the rights of their enemies, even to the rights of condemned criminals. Contrast American concern for the lives of North Vietnamese during their long, unsuccessful efforts against that tiny country with Russian unconcern during their swift crushing of the Hungarian and Czech rebellions. The main American mass-media, the universities and churches, were allowed, indeed officially encouraged, to publicly condemn all alleged or real infringements of North Vietnamese rights. The Russian regime forbids such public opposition as dangerous to the military needs necessary to achieve that future freedom.

The American and Russian alternatives are two manifestations of pseudo-liberalism's deep-seated aversion to a world in which all action is superfluous or irrational. The Russian method, unhampered by an indefinitely postponed liberal freedom, is able to be far stronger politically and militarily. With a good conscience, the Russians crush all expressions of freedom incompatible with the needs of first class military power. Consequently they are much more able than the Americans to solve the problems of internal crime and foreign threats. For the Americans seem congenitally unable to believe that people will abuse

their freedom, if only they are treated with love and sympathy and not with harshness and suspicion. Americans cannot bring themselves to believe, as the Russians do, that men liberated now would criminally misuse their freedom, so they eagerly make treaties with communist tyrants.

The Russian-American debate on human rights is as meaningless for liberalism as any pseudo-liberal effort to make its purely "introspective" freedom concrete. Only in an ancient context would that debate make sense. But then the crucial issue would not be freedom but its natural or divine limitations. Human rights would be sacrificed to one's illiberal duties to independently existing moral-political standards. This sacrifice makes sense only if the ancients could show that their common sense orientation refutes modernity's rejection of it. No such refutation is possible.

Pseudo-liberal concerns with history arise from superstition's inability to leave it at this impossibility. As such, liberal rejection of common sense is meant to be intelligible in itself and, therefore, to stand in no need of historical studies to explain its genesis and development. For liberalism, such studies are needed only to explain, insofar as possible, the essentially inexplicable influence which the irrational forces inspiring superstition have. Those studies are not required to explain the rejection of common sense by a few genuine liberals, but its acceptance by most men. History is needed to make some sense out of the customary faith in something so obviously false as common sense.

If nothing exists but one's perceptions and thoughts, why do most men so passionately cling to selves, and pursue goods, which they believe exist independently of their cognition? That question can be answered in liberal terms only by a historical account, a record of the origin and development of the sensations and thoughts responsible for faith in common sense. If nothing exists but perceptions and thoughts, the common sense belief denying this liberal conviction must itself arise from perceptions and thoughts. History explains how illiberalism or superstition arises in an essentially liberal reality. It is the story of all moral-political life which, as such, is sparked by nothing but superstition. It is the account of blind aimless wills and their foolish conflicts which superstition forces men to take seriously. Far from being guided by evident insight, as the nihilist rejection of common sense is, history is merely a record of the blind resolves enslaving men to certain prejudiced perceptions and thoughts such as faith in one's family, tribe, city, state, race, sex, church, or humanity. Superstition manufactures an "objective" reality for the objects of these faiths. Those pseudo-liberals

who take history seriously will even die to actualize or preserve one or another of these historical developments of superstition.

Heidegger opted for one such historical development, nazi Germany and particularly for the nazi German university. Unlike most thinkers of this century, he was clear that neither his country, nor her universities existed or have any right to exist apart from the resolve to have them. Consequently he despised any allegiance which assumed that its object exists independently of the will that it be. Self-assertion, the willing of its self, is the only existence moral or communal things can have. Heidegger, therefore, rejected Hitler's claim that Aryan superiority over Jews exists by nature apart from will or self-assertion. He traced Hitler's error to "fishing in the murky waters of values and universals," that is, to what Spinoza called superstition. For Hitler wanted his biologists to prove his racial theories scientifically.

Heidegger despised Hitler for this "Platonic" enslavement to the common sense need for independently existing moral standards. The lesson of 1933 was responsible for Heidegger's liberal contempt for politics. It taught him that Hitler's enslavement to superstition was no exception, but the necessary hallmark of political or moral life. Liberals interpret such illiberal necessities as the culmination of senseless, historical developments of thoughts and feelings unable to perceive themselves merely as thoughts and feelings. Only the basic liberal insight into the falsity of the whole illiberal orientation responsible for this inability requires no historical studies to make it intelligible. Anyone liberated from superstition realizes the illiberal fraud behind all pseudo-liberal efforts to obfuscate liberalism's emptiness. Since nothing is more terrifying to superstition than honest liberalism, nothing is more popular academically than pseudo-liberal obfuscation of that terror. Universities and colleges are pseudo-liberalism's most effective contemporary propaganda institutes.

Chapter 25

Addendum to "Liberalism or Illiberalism": The Nihilist (Liberal) Discipline of Scientific Method

Scientific method in investigation is attained only when all moral prejudices are overcome -- it represents a victory over morality.
-- Nietzsche[1]

Truth ... that is scientific method ...
-- Nietzsche[2]

The title of Descartes Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting One's Reason and Seeking Truth in the Sciences indicates the crux of scientific method and why philosophy, as opposed to science, experiences no need for methodological dictatorship over one's reason. The problem for scientific methodology is not so much to create machines that think but to force men to think like machines! On philosophic horizons there is no need for disciplines to compel men to think well since the philosopher's main theoretical and practical care is the concern dominating him in his common-sense, illiberal world: To get what is good -- really good -- for himself. In this appendix, that illiberalism is also called man's "natural" orientation.[3]

Unlike non-philosophers, the philosopher is permeated by the sting of the awareness of lacking adequate knowledge of what is good for him, of his true self-interest. Consequently for him, his main theoretical and practical job is philosophy, the striving to secure that adequate knowledge. Since philosophers interpret this striving as man's most natural drive, no method is necessary to discipline the mind into being philosophic; non-philosophers (ordinary, unquestioning herd-members)

need only become alive to their need to know what they by nature most want to know.

Liberal reason (science) frustrates this natural bent which constitutes the heart of all illiberal (philosophic or political) thought. By annihilating any non-arbitrary good or god, science (liberalism) rejects the common sense, moral-political universe in which a man's chief care is acquisition of what truly is good for him. Until its farce is scientifically exposed, illiberalism assumes the existence of that real, non-arbitrary good. Science is the insight that the world hospitable to politics, and therefore to philosophy, does not exist. Unlike philosophy which gives full rein to the mind's "natural" bent, science tyrannically imposes its methodology to discipline that bent into submission to science's "unnatural" orientation.

That tyranny is the basic meaning of scientific conquest of nature. Nietzsche rightly observes that modernity's hallmark is not the victory of science, but this tyranny of scientific method over science.[4] Here "science" means inquiry deluded by faith in an illiberal universe whose core is the swindle responsible for politics and, therefore, for philosophy. Despising that faith, Nietzsche insists that truth is scientific method: insofar as truth is more than liberal (nihilist) insight, it is the tyrannic will to suppress illiberalism in thought and in action. This suppression's main weapon is scientific methodology.[5] To subvert illiberalism (politics and philosophy), Descartes and his liberal allies invented liberal science, mathematical physics, grounded in a symbolic mathematics not reflecting, as illiberal mathematics had, the common-sense (moral-political) universe. The mathematical assumptions and consequences of Cartesian liberalism are well described by J. Klein.[6] That liberalism despised illiberal mathematics which "had no notion of the Zero." For liberal science,

> the entire `age of barbarism' is characterized by this ignorance, whereas the `age of wisdom' is distinguished by the knowledge of the Zero ... in Nature the true principle of number is the Zero ... a further consequence was the recognition of irrational quantities as true numbers ... we can now speak of rational as well as of irrational numbers.[7]

However Klein fails to emphasize the liberal-nihilist orientation responsible for the emergence of the modern or symbolic interpretation of mathematics and science. That orientation's essence (or lack of essence) is liberal reason's rejection of the centrality of politics (and, therefore,

of philosophy). Not Klein, but Schmitt and, more consistently, Strauss and Jaffa, oppose liberalism's annihilation of illiberalism. This annihilation sparks spiritedness' self-destructive will to defend desire by eradicating the nihilist reality revealed by liberal science and its methodology. Ahab's war on Moby Dick is a poetic version of this resolve, the Baconian-Cartesian determination to conquer "nature." Like Captain Ahab, this determination is self-destructive: Science's reduction of reality to the zero of symbolic mathematics triggers spiritedness' fanatic hatred of science and the nihilism uncovered by it. Spiritedness cannot abide that scientific devaluation of desire, its master. It fights to the death the technological nihilism, the global technological exploitation, demanded by reality's degradation into the Zero, the symbolic (nihilist) world of Cartesian mathematical physics.

Insofar as Klein intended to philosophically oppose that degradation, he, like Aristotle, failed to spot the nihilism responsible for his own subordination of moral-political to intellectual virtue. Both believed they knew enough to advocate the primacy of theoretical ("philosophic") over political-moral concerns. This pseudo-liberal claim to knowledge made them scientific, not philosophic. For philosophers are permeated by the sting of the awareness of lacking that sufficiency of knowledge: they cannot adequately decide between the claims of free inquiry and those of unquestioning obedience. The willingness to make that decision, and to make it in favor of "philosophy," permits one to enlist spiritedness, moral fervor, in "philosophy's" camp. It thereby moralizes "philosophy," converting it into another "truth party," that is, into another pseudo-liberal cause to be defended by spiritedness and its righteous wrath. In this regard, consider Strauss' criticism of Klein's "moralism."[8] The same moralism sparks Aristotle's piety in defense of "philosophy" and its truth.[9] Klein's educational goal, embodied in St. Johns College, reflects this pseudo-liberal moralism:

> I believe there is nothing higher than intellectual activity ... It is necessary, first of all, to reassert that the College is dedicated to the cultivation of the intellectual virtues ... The intellectual powers of man -- of any man -- are his highest powers ... To educate a man means, then, above everything else, to help him develop these powers, to help him acquire intellectual virtues.[10]

When Klein claimed that the moral-political impact of intellectual virtue produces superior practical results, C. Wilson supported him,

noting that "the best single example I can think of was a retreat that had great consequences in the American situation -- Henry David Thoreau."[11] Thoreau was a pseudo-liberal, a liberal politicized (moralized) by cowardly unwillingness to acknowledge the nihilism at liberalism's core. The disastrous moral-political (and therefore, philosophic) consequences of Thoreau's extremism are described by Jaffa.[12] Pseudo-liberalism (political liberalism) becomes catastrophic extremism, the more alive it is to its nihilism. Then prudent statesmanship is abandoned in favor of the fanatic resolve of a Hess or Bukharin. Thoreau was far closer than ordinary liberal democrats to that fanaticism. His is a good example of the effect of science on politics, of intellectual "virtue" on morality: liberal science (nihilism) annihilates moral-political (philosophic) illusion. Pseudo-liberals blind themselves to this destruction by moralizing nihilism (science). The nihilism of Klein's pedagogy is criticized by S. Schaub.[13] Like Bloom, Klein lacked the courage to admit the nihilism responsible for his liberalism.

Cartesian (symbolic) mathematics, liberalism's main weapon, provokes the fury resolved to destroy science and the reality unmasked by it. That anger's main foe is not illiberalism (philosophy, politics) but its own liberal reason: it cannot endure science's "victory over morality," a victory sparking the spirited self pity of a nonexistent self, a self reduced to zero. Spiritedness opposes science not philosophy, blocking a total break with illiberalism. It thereby obfuscates the real (nihilist) import of symbolic mathematics, the methodological reduction of reality to zero.

That obfuscation prevents pseudo-liberals from realizing that "scientific method ... represents a victory over morality." Instead they flee to some form of "consciousness raising" which permits them to see science as moral, supportive of their favorite jackass worship. Truth is avoided by a human "nature" always prone to embrace illiberalism. Philosophers and moral-political men lack "the scientific mind ... that instinctive distrust against" the mind's "natural" illiberalism.[14]

Their outrage at science's erosion of morality is obvious in the moral (philosophic) reaction to an obvious miscarriage of justice, the verdict of not guilty by reason of insanity in John Hinckley's trial for his attempted murder of the President of the United States -- another glaring example of contemporary liberal democracy's cowardly inability to exact the death penalty where it obviously is warranted, a cowardice hiding behind so-called scientific justification. Jaffa's attack on the Hinckley verdict, and on the liberal science -- in this case, psychiatry -- responsible for it, is distinguished by its refreshing freedom from

the usual professorial (pseudo-liberal) nonsense, the dishonest effort to deny or moralize liberal science's subversion of morality.

> The nature of the psychiatric testimony stands revealed in a remark made by several psychiatrists in interviews after the case. That remark was that `sanity' is a legal, but not a psychiatric concept ... This is merely a particular instance of the more general proposition of [liberal] science, that sanity and insanity, like right and wrong, just and unjust, or good and bad, are `value judgments.' And `value judgments' have no standing in science, social or otherwise. In the Hinckley case, the American public had a glimpse of the nature of [liberal] science ... It is the most powerful intellectual force within the free world, and dominates the teaching of much more even than the social sciences in our universities ... What the American public needs to know -- far more than it needs to know about the defect in the law revealed by the Hinckley case -- is the moral perversity of the doctrines that dominate our universities, and of the higher education that the public is making such sacrifices to support.[15]

Chapter 26

Review of Dialogue and Dialectic: Eight Hermeneutical Studies on Plato[1]

This book contains eight essays by Professor Gadamer translated and edited by Professor Smith. Gadamer shares the error informing his book with most, if not all, modern (liberal) academics and, in particular, with classical scholars. It arises from neglect of Nietzsche's main criticism of modern scientists and scholars and it surfaces most clearly in Gadamer's interpretation of the Phaedo's turn to the *logoi*. It is responsible for Gadamer's confusion of Aristotle and Plato, science and philosophy, apolitical and political thought.

Gadamer finds a common ground between Aristotle and Plato in their "seeking truth in the *logoi* ... On precisely this point Aristotle is a true Platonist". Gadamer fails to realize that the main difference is in the *logoi* considered central by them. As Gadamer notes, Aristotle's turn makes metaphysics primary. He does not see that the Socratic-Platonic turn makes the *logoi* of politics, not those of metaphysics or ontology, primary. For Plato's Socrates the speech to be investigated is the moral-political speech shared by him with his fellow Athenians.

Nietzsche uncovered the misunderstanding informing the pseudo-liberal scholarship championed by Gadamer. He saw that the hallmark of the philosophers (Socratics) was enslavement to politics, to the people and their herd instinct. All bestial or human herds inculcate one chief care: the need to get what is good for oneself. The only difference between philosophic (Socratic) and unphilosophic herd members is that the philosophers question their herd's always illiberal orthodoxies. However in the decisive respect they remain loyal herd members: they do not question the herd instinct faith that they have selves and that something really is good for these selves. Nietzsche sees human

thought's main error in this Platonic or herd instinct invention of a real good and a mind or self which divines it. In his apotheosis of this error, Plato was the most consistent philosopher, the philosopher most enslaved to the illiberal instincts of his herd and therefore the most political philosopher.

To be sure, Gadamer notices the moral-political (illiberal) bent of Socratic-Platonic philosophy. However the radicality of this bent eludes him. Nietzsche saw that the illiberalism inspiring the faith that moral-political cares, the concern with the good, is primary, also inspires the illusion of living in a coherent, intelligible world in which those cares are at home. Deprived of this comforting illusion, men (and beasts) would realize that life is a chaos of empty experiences, impressions as Hume called them. As "Europe's first perfect nihilist," Nietzsche knew that science, genuine knowledge of reality, was liberal or nihilist, revealing a world consisting of nothing but interpretations, points of view, methods of experiencing or experimenting. Precisely because science, as Gadamer notes, arises from "clear insight" it cannot be what Gadamer claims: "the foundation of human culture." Nietzsche realized that science's essential nihilism cannot be the foundation of anything.

Gadamer wrongly makes a certain metaphysical-mathematical notion of unity and duality responsible for the Platonic realization that philosophy can never be *sophia* or science. The real reason is that Plato never forgot philosophy's rootedness in the herd instinct faith which gives it its illiberal orientation and goal: philosophy arises from this political faith, not from liberal scientific knowledge (of life's nihilism).

Gadamer wrongly believes that the Socratic turn to the *logoi* freed Plato from perplexities caused not by science, but by sophistry. "Sophist" means wise man or scientist. The sophists (and this means primarily modern pseudo-liberal intellectuals) only apply science's nihilism, its liberal relativism, to human affairs. Naturally science was abhorrent to Socrates who, like any good herd member, complained that he was blinded by its nihilist insistence upon grasping things directly. For this direct or scientific grasp always reduces reality to liberal-nihilist experiences or methods.

Socrates' flight from apolitical-sophistic thought to political *logoi* was more philosophic than Aristotle's subordination of those *logoi*, of political philosophy, to metaphysics or ontology. The consistent elaboration of this subordination is not Aristotle's Physics or Metaphysics but Nietzsche's Joyful Science or Beyond Good and Evil. Gadamer does not see that Aristotle is, in this crucial sense, closer to Nietzsche than to Plato. There is in Gadamer's book much of that liberal or *aes-*

thetisches Bewusstsein which dissociates men from the actual politics of their herd (and therefore from philosophy) in favor of apolitical convictions such as Gadamer's contention that the Academy, "This community of students applying themselves rigorously to mathematics and dialectic is no apolitical society." If a collection of rootless intellectuals no longer attached to the politics of their own cities is not apolitical, what is? Perhaps the Academy's enterprise was political in some sense, but only if it resembled the work ascribed to Plato in Machiavelli's chapter on conspiracies in his Discourses on Livy! In any case, Gadamer's Aristotelian Plato is more concerned with his mathematical ontology than with the politics of the "cave" or herd whose illiberal instincts molded his thought.

A similar error makes Gadamer overemphasize Plato's opposition to Homer, the creator of Achilles, that personification of the spirit of vengeance which Nietzsche rightly finds at the heart of all politics and, therefore, of all philosophy. Anger or moral indignation, the spirit of revenge, like philosophy, arise from the illiberal faith, the heart of all politics, that one has or needs goods without which life becomes unlivable. Hatred is the natural reaction to whoever threatens those goods. Nietzsche and Aristotle, not Socrates or Plato, want to be redeemed from that hatred, the most political of all passions. Without intending it, Gadamer has written a more Nietzschean than Platonic book.

ophy as one "discipline" among many, a discipline concerned mainly with "conceptual" and not "empirical" issues. Thus he interprets the will to power in human motivation as of "psychological" rather than "philosophic" interest. Consequently personal matters are not so philosophic as impersonal ones. Radically opposed to Magnus, Nietzsche insists that nothing important in a genuine thinker is impersonal. His nihilism springs from a radically personal experience for which all impersonal "rational norms" are merely the relation of deep "psychological" drives to one another. Consequently Nietzsche characterizes thinkers not so much by their impersonal rationality, but by the extraordinariness and terror of their personal, nihilist experiences.

From Nietzsche's point of view, men priding themselves on their capacity for impersonal research are mere intellectuals or scholars. That such men should be mistaken for thinkers is perhaps the chief sign of that democratic-socialistic leveling which so nauseated Nietzsche. Magnus' "method of segregating philosophy" from personal or "empirical" issues is, from a Nietzschean standpoint, an effort to domesticate Nietzsche, to make him presentable to the pseudo-liberal intellectuals who produce and are produced by that leveling, that is, to people whose *bon sens* cannot seriously be touched by nihilism. Their pseudo-liberal love of humanitarianism and equality begs Zarathustra to transform them into last men rather than supermen. For the last man is the product of their education. The pseudo-liberal instincts molding these "liberated" educators are Nietzsche's main contemporary enemies.

Nietzsche claims to be an anti-Tarantula, an aristocratic reaction to modern teachers of equality. Since Magnus does not share Nietzsche's profound revulsion against the tarantula's egalitarian poison, he fails to see that Nietzsche's main doctrines, the eternal return and the will to power, are rooted in what he rightly calls Nietzsche's "elitist" bias. All moral biases, that is, all moralities, are the products of arbitrary evolution of various herd-instincts. Since the American and French Revolutions the democratic-socialistic instincts have been greatly strengthened. While there still seemed to be time, Nietzsche wanted to overpower these instincts with aristocratic ones.

If reason culminates in a nihilism for which nothing matters, Nietzsche must rely on unconscious instinct rather than on consciousness or rationality to defeat that emerging egalitarianism. He must teach mankind's teachers to form men able to will the eternal return of the past, for only the past was relatively free of the radical egalitarianism taught by the last men. The superman wills that the future be aristocratic like the past and not egalitarian like the present. Although there

are other problems in the willing of eternal return, this anti-egalitarianism is central to it.

Since no morality can be legitimated by nihilism, only the strength of the superman's instincts, and not his reason, forces him to take his fight against egalitarianism seriously. The formation of those instincts requires politics on a global scale, the intentional inculcation over millennia of aristocratic instincts regardless of the cost in human lives and suffering. Thus global politics and the need for world wars is far more crucial to Nietzsche than Magnus imagines. He rightly notes that Nietzsche subordinates politics to philosophy. However he fails to see that the global political conditions for the creation of supermen, philosophers of the future, requires tyrannical imposition over millennia: "Every mistake in every sense is the result of degeneration of instinct ... all that is good is instinct ... all that is good is inherited; what is not inherited is imperfect, is merely a beginning."[3]

Breeding the proper instincts requires the global hegemony of an atheistic aristocracy prepared to use mankind as an experimental laboratory to produce over millennia the liberal instincts of a few supermen, even if millions must be annihilated in the process. Contrary to what Magnus believes, Nietzsche's elitism is "protofascist." To be sure, Nietzsche would despise Hitler for the same reason that Heidegger did. Heidegger charged Hitler with corrupting "the inner truth and greatness of national socialism" by "fishing in the murky waters of values and universals."

Hitler justified his annihilation of millions by appealing to what he regarded as the natural superiority of aryans to Jews. That kind of appeal reveals an intellectual dishonesty arising from a *bon sens* unable to experience the death of god. Hitler still was far too illiberal or Platonic -- too concerned with rational or scientific norms -- to be alive to that experience's radical nihilism. The lesson of 1933 taught Heidegger that no political-moral order could arise from that radical rejection of common sense. Nietzsche still hoped desperately for the tyrannical creation over millennia of a global atheistic aristocracy whose spiritualization would be the superman able to will that the future be formed by the past's inequality and slavery. To be sure, he, like Heidegger, would despise a world ruled by Russia or America. Nietzsche preferred mankind's destruction!

It is here that Nietzsche is deeply inconsistent and not where Magnus believes he is. Magnus finds a contradiction in Nietzsche's assertion that nothing is true or that only interpretations (values) but no facts exist. How can the assertion that nothing is true be true, if truth does

not exist? Is not Nietzsche's view only an interpretation, if no facts exist? Such problems exist for pre-Nietzschean or Platonic thought, that is, for thought essentially impersonal and bound by common sense, thought too cowardly to confront the abyss of nihilism. They exist for pseudo-liberal intellectuals and scholars, not for genuine scientists.

Magnus overlooks that liberal (nihilist) abyss in his interpretation of Zarathustra's claim that words are illusive bridges. He takes it to mean that eternal return as empirical cosmology is a bridge to eternal return as existential imperative "just as the dwarf and animals are a bridge to Zarathustra." But the dwarf and animals, like the illiberal orientation in which they are rooted, cannot be a bridge to Zarathustra. In the preceding sentence Zarathustra makes this impossibility apparent when he declares -- indeed decrees: "For me -- how could there be anything outside of me? There is no outside!" [4] Magnus' translation replaces the harsh exclamation point with a gentle period.

If god is dead, no outside world (or inner self) exists in which the gulf between "selves" may be bridged by genuine community. This abyss is obfuscated by the illusory bridges built by speech, that child of the age-old herd instinct. Indeed all "bridges" are illusory, since nothing exists between which they might be built. The exclamation point omitted by Magnus indicates an attempt to will an essentially boundless self *ex nihilo*! Here he follows Kaufmann's Zarathustra translation which often substitutes gentle liberal democratic question marks or periods for Nietzsche's desperate, protofascist exclamation points.

That sort of desperate *ex nihilo* willing is needed to fight the dwarf. Zarathustra calls the dwarf the spirit of heaviness (or gravity). It is the spirit of matter or mattering in the expression "This matters." As such it is Nietzsche's worst enemy, the good in itself, which, according to Plato, is responsible for anything's mattering or being good. Consequently Plato's Republic makes it superior to and the cause of all being (ontology) and all knowing (epistemology, logic, science). The spirit of mattering (or good in itself) wants things to matter, to be weighty, important. Thus Magnus' *bon sens* insists that rational norms such as the law of contradiction should matter to Nietzsche's thought. However Magnus' "method of segregating philosophy" (from "empirical" or "psychological" issues) means that those norms can not matter at all to the very personal experience (death of god) at the heart of genuine thoughtfulness. This experience distinguishes intellectual "depth" from the "shallow coherence and lucidity" of a concern with rational norms which admits that those norms do not apply in the "empirical" or "actual" world. It segregates real thought from the empty *bon sens*

which fiddles with mere concepts while Rome burns. Nietzsche's teaching is not harsh to that pseudo-liberal emptiness. In an unpublished note from the time of Zarathustra, Nietzsche remarks that his teaching is mild against those who do not have faith in it. It has no threats of Hell. People who lack faith in it are left with an empty, flighty life in their own consciousness.

Nietzsche's real inconsistency is not, as Magnus believes, the self-contradiction of his insistence that the law of contradiction does not matter. For it matters only to the common sense of a herd-instinct too shallow to confront the experience of nihilism. Men with the courage of their nihilist convictions will strive to confront the dwarf as Zarathustra finally must: "There is something in me which I call courage. Up to now this courage has beaten to death every discouragement for me. This courage finally commanded me to stand my ground and say 'Dwarf! You! Or I!'"

This is Nietzsche's real problem -- the spirit of mattering, of commitment or concern for anything, must be beaten to death, if god is dead and nothing matters. In the Zarathustra, the prophet of doom, the leech brain expert, Zarathustra's shadow, and the ugliest man demonstrate that nihilism's agony in souls without the courage of their nihilist conviction. It is no wonder that Zarathustra considers the dwarf his arch-enemy and devil. For his main doctrine, the superman's willing of eternal return, arises from his profound determination that inequality and slavery should eternally matter. The prospect of a democratic-socialistic world hegemony nauseates him and makes him long either for a superman capable of overcoming it or for mankind's destruction.

That nausea explains his repudiation of the Socratic exhortation to self-knowledge, especially in what the pseudo-liberal Magnus admires as its contemporary form "in the recent youthful exhortation to 'do your own thing' ... to find what is genuinely yours, your own, and to remain faithful to that." For the pseudo-liberal instincts of contemporary youth have been so formed by millennia of Christianity (popularized Platonism) that even when they no longer believe in Christianity's god they cling all the more to its morality of pity for suffering, inequality, poverty, etc.

Since conscious, rational self-knowledge, if not self-deceived, culminates in the experience of nihilism for which nothing matters, Nietzsche rejects the Socratic exhortation.[5] Instead his spirit of mattering compels him to subordinate consciousness to unconsciousness, rationality to instinct. And his instincts would be repelled both by the "do your own thing" of contemporary youth and by the secularized Chris-

tian morality informing Magnus' academically respectable bow to women's equality, his insistence that "man" is used throughout his book in a neuter sense. His preference for *Übermensch* to "superman" is similarly motivated by his support of current academic orthodoxy. Nothing could be more opposed to Nietzsche who despised concern for women's equality as

> a typical sign of empty- headedness and a thinker who has shown himself shallow on this point -- shallow in instinct! -- is untrustworthy as such ... probably he will be too 'short' for all fundamental questions of life ... unable to penetrate to any depth.[6]

W. Kaufmann inadvertently reveals Nietzsche's contempt for him in his pseudo-liberal (feminist) attack on this aphorism which, according to Kaufmann, " ... is surely wrong ... and shallow."[7] Nietzsche's loathing for Kaufmann's efforts to domesticate him, to make him palatable to the leftist professors dominating American schools, is nowhere more apparent.

The same professoriate deplores and finds incomprehensible the nazi (or communist) sympathies of a Heidegger or a Paul de Man. Real nazis and communists are as close as the desperation of Bukharin and Hess (and that of Adam and Eve -- below, "Feminist Propaganda at Scripps College"). Lack of this desperation is pseudo-liberalism's hallmark, an idiocy celebrating its "liberation" as "invigorating" and "noble"[8]: "It fiddles while Rome burns ... It does not know that it fiddles and it does not know that Rome burns."[9] Consider Janis Joplin's more courageous -- and therefore more honest -- appraisal of liberalism's liberation: "Freedom's just another word for nothing else to lose."[10]

Since nihilism means that nothing exists except essentially chaotic acts of consciousness, the illiberal spirit of mattering compels Nietzsche to devalue conscious reason in favor of unconscious instinct. However for nihilism that devaluation matters as little as any act of consciousness. Nietzsche's desperate longing that it should matter -- and matter eternally! -- is responsible for his passionate demand that mankind be used as a laboratory to breed the instincts required to create the superman. Thus Nietzsche loses his fight with the dwarf, the spirit of mattering, Plato's good in itself.

So long as anything matters to anyone -- especially to a superman!, god is not dead, thought remains footnotes to Plato. But if god is dead,

if the superman is no more than a super-dwarf, then he is not so far removed from Clark Kent's "do-gooder" as Magnus believes. In any case Nietzsche's deepest inconsistency is not his assertion that nothing matters but the fact that something did matter so much to him. Why should anything matter to a genuine liberal, someone permeated with the experience of god's death! The great experiment of Nietzsche's life -- and perhaps of human life as such -- the attempt to incorporate the "truth" -- to make the experience of nihilism instinctual -- must fail. For that incorporation would be a return to the old faith sparked by Plato's good in itself; it would make nihilism matter. Furthermore that incorporation seems precluded by the power of illiberalism's age-old, instinctual need for a goal, for "man will rather will nothingness than not will at all."[11]

Chapter 28

Liberalism's Moloch: An Interpretation of Flaubert's Madame Bovary and Salammbo[1]

Liberalism negated the political; by so doing, liberalism did not banish the political from the world, but only concealed it. Liberalism brought about that politics is carried on by antipolitical speech. Liberalism has not killed the political, but merely killed understanding of the political and sincerity regarding the political. To clear the obfuscation of reality which liberalism has caused, the political must be brought out and shown to be completely undeniable ... It does not suffice that the failure of liberalism is recognized as a fact; that liberalism is shown refuting itself in every political action it takes ... What is required is to replace the `astoundingly consistent systematics of liberal thought' ... by a system that does not negate the political, but brings the political into full recognition ... Schmitt is aware that the `astoundingly consistent system of liberal thought is even today not replaced by any other system' and this suffices in itself to characterize the significance of his attempt: for by this awareness, he stands alone among the opponents of liberalism, who usually carry in their pocket a fully worked-out illiberal theory.[2]

The world of today and existence in general weigh heavily and horribly on my shoulders. I am so disgusted with everything ... It is a world in itself, the world as it exists in the dreams of liberal democrats, and as I shall never live to see it, thank God. The things that will hold

> *the center of the stage during the next two or three hundred years are enough to make a man of taste vomit. It is time to disappear.*[3]

Both Madame Bovary and Salammbo are spirited women moved by heroic longings. Their differences reflect the opposition of the regimes in which they live. Salammbo was a priestess in a city whose piety sanctified those longings; the regnant morality in Emma's pseudo-liberal regime ridiculed or condemned them. Thus Salammbo's life and death were ennobled by her illiberal religion while the liberal piety ruling Emma's France made a mockery even of the suicide to which it drove her. Like Oedipus, Emma is doomed from birth by the liberal gods of her country. Those gods are incarnated in the pharmacist, the defender of scientific liberation from religious superstition, and the priest, the champion of science's subordination to religion. Their conflict is the pseudo-liberal version of the old war between reason and revelation.

Untouched by the conflict between the pharmacist and the priest, Emma yearns for a way of life prior to it. Without fully realizing it, she wants to be what Salammbo was, part of a sacred community such as Carthage. Her almost instinctive aversion to liberalism is manifest in her encounters with the priest and the pharmacist. When her marriage is in trouble, Emma turns to the priest. Even during her convent days, the glamour and sentimentality of church ceremony attracted her:

> Living constantly in the warm atmosphere of the classrooms and among the pale women who wore rosaries with copper crosses attached to them, she gradually succumbed to the mystic languor which she breathed in with the perfumes of the altar ... Instead of following the Mass, she looked at the blue-bordered religious pictures in her book.[4]

However, the convent demanded a concern with other-worldly dogmas foreign to Emma, since its pious concern with all men was anchored in a holiness not of this world. The Church's cosmopolitan union was not for Emma who sought a worldly happiness in those narrower communities more in harmony with man's limited capacity of knowing and loving others.

When the priest, whose universal compassion precluded compassion for her suffering, suggested that she consider the lot of the impoverished proletariat, her answer seemed incomprehensible, if not sinful,

to him: "What does that matter?"[5] Naturally this reply appears callous in the light of liberalism's secular and sacred pieties which stress the brotherhood of man. It calls to mind the ordinary Athenian's incredulity when Socrates demanded universal definitions of justice rather than narrow, chauvinistic Athenian ones. However the tables now are turned. Socrates opposed the dominant *ethos* of Athens which happened to be its civic piety. Emma opposed the dominant piety of France which happened to be universal and, in this sense, Socratic. Emma's reply to the priest is nothing far-fetched or inhuman, however foreign it may be to the priest. It is similar to the familial piety prompting Naboth to reject King Ahab's demand: "The Lord forbid it to me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee."[6] The same piety compels Hamilcar Barca, Salammbo's father, to accept command of the Punic army against the barbarians who threaten his sacred hearth. Like Macaulay's Horatius, Barca knew no better way to die "than facing fearful odds, for the ashes of his fathers and the temples of his Gods." These illiberal heroes would experience nothing but contempt for the liberalism founded by Aristotle and Jesus and politicized by Machiavelli and his students.

Emma's revulsion at cosmopolitan moralities is apparent during the Agricultural Fair's celebration of liberalism's freedom and progress. She ignores the fair's main speaker as he praises agriculture's role in science's war against poverty and ignorance. Flaubert demonstrates that rhetoric's emptiness by interspersing pieces of it throughout the conversation between Emma and her seducer.[7] Although the seducer, like the agricultural expert, is not gripped by the need for sacred community which moves Emma, he realizes Emma's immunity to the expert's liberal propaganda. Thus he presents himself as sharing Emma's need for something superior to bourgeois society:

> Aren't you disgusted by the way society conspires against us? Is there a single feeling they don't condemn? The noblest instincts and purest affinities are persecuted and slandered.[8]

Although the seducer's soul is in harmony with the liberalism repellent to Emma, he knows precisely how to appeal to her. He diagnoses her boredom and disgust with her marriage as a need for love. However his lack of comprehension of her need is apparent in his inability to grasp "why she should make such a fuss over such a simple thing as a love affair."[9] For him, their love is a game, an "affair," whose strategy he maps out well beforehand.[10] Moved by the cos-

mopolitan "shrewdness of those who hold themselves aloof in any relationship,"[11] the seducer cannot help but degrade Emma's need for sacred union into something reflecting his emptiness. Chained to a horizon on which no relationship is sacred, that shrewdness is at home only in men who experience themselves as liberals, autonomous individuals liberated from the narrow pieties of an unenlightened past.

The vehemence with which Emma hurls herself into what to him is merely an affair baffles the seducer. Emma's quest is essentially religious but the religion sought by her is unknown to him. She seeks the bondage of sacred communal ties; first in the convent, then in her marriage and finally in adultery. The non-existence of such ties in her France -- or in any liberal regime -- dooms her. Emma experiences difficulties similar to those of Socrates' interlocutors when she attempts to account for her unhappiness, her awareness of her fate. For the very language used in liberal regimes condemns her yearning for sacred familial bonds. At best, she could have asserted that such ties are good for men. Yet even -- and especially -- this statement arises from a global concern, a concern with all men, and not with mere familial or civic unions. Only on the horizons of illiberal cities such as Salammbo's Carthage are such unions infinitely more precious than humanitarian cares. For they alone, and not humanitarian concerns, are sanctified by Carthage's familial and civic gods. Thus Socrates' demand for universal answers to moral questions seemed foolish or impious in ancient regimes. However both his questions and the cosmopolitan answers implied by them are at home in regimes whose morality produces the priest and the pharmacist, not to speak of the seducer. Obviously these regimes have no greater foe than the passion driving Emma to seek something akin to Salammbo's piety.

The absence of Salammbo's piety in pseudo-liberal regimes deprives Emma of a language in which to articulate her unhappiness:

> But what was making her so unhappy? Where was the extraordinary catastrophe that had wrecked her life? She raised her head and looked around, as though trying to find the cause of her suffering ... She was not happy and never had been. Why was life so unsatisfying? Why did everything she leaned on instantly crumble into dust? ... Nothing was worth seeking -- everything was a lie![12]

The catastrophe which wrecked Emma's happiness is perhaps best articulated in the Republic's philosopher-kings so dear to Professor

Bloom. Crowned by Sophocles' Oedipus the Tyrant, Athenian tragedy is inseparable from the acknowledgment that familial ties are sacred. Like the family curse in Aeschylus' Agamemnon, the curse on Oedipus presents itself as tragic only to those making that acknowledgment. For they alone experience incest as sacrilege. By depriving the family of its sacredness -- and, indeed, by outlawing it, the philosopher-kings pave the way for condemnation of Athenian tragedy and a more permissive attitude toward incest.[13] Their liberal knowledge of the good permits men to consider themselves virtuous when they command the intellectual detachment to "hold themselves aloof in any relationship." Their allegiance is not to their families and cities, but to a scientific (the pharmacist) or theological (the priest) order even more universal than mankind.

Instinctively Emma divined the emptiness of family life informed by the pseudo-liberalism common to the priest and the pharmacist. She sensed that families founded on that morality were no better than legalized adultery. Only after her death does Charles, her husband, grasp something of her attitude. Probably he now sympathized with her earlier desire to be "married at midnight by torchlight"[14] which seemed senseless to him at the time. Now, after her degrading suicide, Charles snaps at the priest who discourses on the vanity of earthly things: "I hate your God!"[15]

The pseudo-liberal God (there are no liberal gods) now hateful to Charles disestablished the tragic fate to which he appeals in the "only lofty philosophical remark he ever made in his life."[16] He made it shortly before he died of a broken heart. After telling the seducer that he does not blame him, he adds: "Only fate is to blame." Emma's fate, if it can be called that, and, through her, Charles', was an empty shadow of the irrevocable doom of Oedipus and Agamemnon. It appears comic or contemptible on moral horizons encouraging men to experience themselves as liberated from the sacred familial ties at the heart of ancient tragedy. That tragedy is meaningless, if those hallowed restraints are antiquated prejudices out of place in "enlightened" regimes dedicated to the pseudo-liberal's pursuit of his own happiness. An expert in that pursuit, the seducer finds Charles' recourse to fate beneath contempt. The seducer "who had directed that fate, judged him to be extremely meek for a man in his position -- comical, even, and a little contemptible."[17]

At the heart of the seducer's contempt is a liberalism liberating men to understand themselves as free to bend fate to their selfish ends. The tragic hero's confrontation with his implacable fate is degraded into

a problem to be solved by human ingenuity. The pre-scientific hero is replaced by the pharmacist, the seducer, and the priest. Their essential pettiness, their lack of heroic greatness, is responsible for the sharp contrast between the main characters in the two novels. In Madame Bovary, the main characters, except Emma, and in the end, Charles, are lowest common denominators, trivial examples of the human types to which they belong. The opposite holds true in Salammbo except for Spendius, the nearest approximation to a scientist (liberal) in that tale.

In Madame Bovary, the case for Christianity is not presented by a Jesus or a Pascal, but by a smug, self-satisfied priest. Similarly science is not defended by an Aristotle or a Descartes, but by a smug, self-satisfied pharmacist. In Salammbo, on the contrary, Carthage's heroic stature is embodied in Hamilcar Barca, not in some slavish scribe. Madame Bovary presents a Lilliput; Salammbo, a Brobdingnag. In that Lilliput, Barca's sacred familial and civic ties are devalued by liberalism which liberates the talents of the priest, the seducer, and the pharmacist. Consequently, on Barca's horizon, they do not differ essentially from Aristotle or Jesus, the founders of that morality.[18] Flaubert indicates this essential sameness by embodying Madame Bovary's regnant morality in its lowest common denominators. In Salammbo's Carthage, as in Socrates' Athens, this morality is opposed to the old, inherited civic piety. Thus it is represented by Spendius, a shrewd ex-slave who dies courageously on the cross.

Sainte-Beuve criticized Salammbo's lack of

> a Greek, just one, animated with the spirit of Gelo, an intellectual disciple of the Xenophons, Aristotles, of the ancient sages of his country, a young Achean contemporary with Aratus, already having within him the human sentiments of Terence, having read Menander and who, having strayed into this frightful war, judging it with feelings like ours ... would help us, perhaps, to stand them. The author has refused a fine means of contrast and illumination. Must there be, either inside or outside these walls of Byrsa, nobody to say in his heart: I am a man?[19]

To which Flaubert replied:

> You regret that I did not introduce a philosopher among the Greeks, a reasoner charged with giving us a course in ethics, and performing good actions -- a gentleman in short, 'feeling

> like ourselves.' But come! Was this possible? Aratus, whom you recall to me, is the very model that I selected, when imagining Spendius; he was a man of escapades and stratagems.[20]

Spendius is Salammbo's philosopher-king, since he, like Machiavelli or Marx, liberalized (politicized) philosophy and "philosophized" politics. Through his influence over Matho, he rules a cosmopolitan army of mercenaries torn from their native lands by greed and ambition. Resembling the seducer, Spendius too is moved by "the shrewdness of those who hold themselves aloof in any relationship."[21] This shrewdness permits him to foresee that loss of Tanith's sacred veil will decrease Carthage's will to fight, since pious Carthaginians identify piety and patriotism.[22] Just as the seducer takes advantage of Emma's unhappiness, so Spendius manipulates Carthaginian piety for his own ends. Both men attempt to give substance to their empty, rootless lives by parasitically exploiting souls informed by illiberal piety. Their ability to face death bravely, as the crucified Spendius does, does not alter the essentially nihilist cast of their souls. Emma senses this ugliness when the seducer insists that his contempt for Charles precludes fear of his reaction to their adultery: "She was amazed at his bravery, although she sensed beneath it a kind of tactlessness and unconcerned vulgarity that shocked her."[23] The same ugliness characterizes Spendius, the sole Lilliputian in Salammbo and, therefore, the only one who would feel at home in Madame Bovary.

Emma's longing for heroic grandeur is the closest approximation to tragedy in regimes whose liberalism degrades life to comic or Lilliputian proportions. Heidegger calls that longing the most pervasive experience in contemporary regimes.[24] He describes these regimes as *Unheimlisch* or *Unheimisch* which usually is translated as "uncanny" in the sense of "monstrous" or "evil." However the literal translation is "homeless" or without a home (*Heim*) or homeland (*Heimat*). Men without roots, without their own sacred hearth, seem uncanny or monstrous. Thus, Matho, who finds Spendius' cosmopolitan aloofness from all familial or civic piety incomprehensible, suspects the philosopher of secretly worshipping a private demon of his own.[25] Similarly the Athenians accused Socrates of importing new gods or demons to account for his indifference to their civic piety.

Regimes conducive to homelessness enthrone the cosmopolitan morality of a Spendius or a Machiavelli. In such regimes, the chief opposition to the reigning morality springs from the experience which

Heidegger calls *Heimweh* which usually is translated as "homesickness," but literally means "the pain of home" or "home-pain." It is the cry of that part of the soul which cannot be reconciled with the hegemony of the priest and the pharmacist. The only speech and thought legitimate under that hegemony compels men to perceive themselves chiefly as liberals, as men -- human beings -- and not as Carthaginians or fathers. For it has disestablished the familial and civic piety which made Hamilcar Barca see himself chiefly as a Barca and a Carthaginian.

Sainte-Beuve regrets Salammbo's lack of psychological analysis. Its characters, especially Salammbo herself, seem to him flat and unreal:

> If you want to interest us, depict for us people who are similar and analogous to ourselves ... What can be unmistakably affirmed, with all the strength of one's common sense, is that at no time or in no place did men ever behave thus or did things happen like that.[26]

Consequently he finds Salammbo soulless. In his simple answer to this criticism, Flaubert also explains why the liberal emphasis on individuality necessary in Madame Bovary was impossible in Salammbo: "The soul of the tale [Salammbo] is Moloch."[27] Carthaginians did not experience themselves as anything apart from their sacred community and the gods who protected it. Their psychology was informed by this political theology. Consequently to grasp the souls of Barca and his daughter one must look at their familial and civic gods, and not so much at their individual selves. The kind of psychological (liberal) delineation of individuals admired by Sainte-Beuve is at home in Madame Bovary, not in Salammbo.

A similar error is responsible for Sainte-Beauve's interpretation of the scene in which Barca inspects his storehouses:

> In the whole of his visit to the storehouses the author's object is not to show us the character of Hamilcar. He merely wanted to show the storehouses ... Hamilcar, the father of Hannibal, gains nothing by this visit, in which he is presented as a violent, covetous man, lacking in self-control, and at every other moment beside himself with rage.[28]

Identifying religion with the liberalism of Aristotle and Jesus, Sainte-Beuve could not sympathize with the familial piety sparking Barca's rage.

Central to the chapter entitled "Hamilcar Barca," the storehouse inspection reveals the ground of illiberal piety. Prior to the inspection, Barca's disgust with the senate's animosity toward him and its inadequate military preparations causes his refusal to accept the supreme military command. However, before making this decision final, he inspects his estate which has been deteriorating rapidly (partly due to the senate's ill-will) in his absence. He also learns that his daughter seems to be implicated in the theft of Tanith's sacred veil by the barbarians. The meaning of the whole scene is most apparent in his inspection of the Barca burial ground which is also the family's secret treasure house:

> Hamilcar stood smiling with folded arms, and was less delighted by the sight of the riches than by the consciousness of their possession. They were inaccessible, exhaustless, infinite. His ancestors sleeping beneath his feet transmitted something of their eternity to his heart. He felt very near to these subterranean deities.[29]

To Barca, the decay of his estate was sacrilege against his fathers, his family gods. The sacred duty to restore his family's wealth sparked the pious wrath which Sainte-Beuve found so childish. It also accounts for Barca's extraordinary measures to prevent the sacrifice of Hannibal.[30] The wrath caused by the storehouse inspection is somewhat appeased by the thought that Hannibal will uphold the Barca glory after his father's death. Like Sainte-Beuve, the slaves could not perceive why this reflection gentles the pious old warrior.[31] For it is the hallmark of slaves not to feel bound by sacred familial ties. The same reason prevents them from understanding the tragic simplicity of Barca's reversal of his earlier refusal in the chapter's last line: "O Lights of the Baalim, I accept the command of the Punic forces against the Barbarian army."[32]

Barca's love for his son is the reverse side of his dislike for his daughter. Even apart from his suspicion about Salammbo's part in the veil's theft, "the birth of daughters was considered a calamity in the religion of the sun."[33] Why, then, is the novel entitled Salammbo and not Hamilcar Barca? I suggest that Flaubert presented Salammbo and her Carthage as a solution to the insoluble problem which doomed Emma in a regime dominated by the *ethos* common to the priest and the pharma-

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While nothing was so necessary as Moloch's pitiless wrath, nothing was more precious than the always endangered joys of peace protected by that wrath but sanctified by the goddess. Not Tanith, but Moloch demanded the sacrifice of the noblest sons to appease his monstrous cruelty.[40] Barca accepts command of the Carthaginian army to insure his family's perpetuity and glory. In this decisive sense, Moloch exists to protect the realm of Tanith. In endangered cities such as Carthage, this protection was a perpetual need. The Carthaginian woman was responsible for the domestic hearth while her men fought to preserve its sacred flame. Thus, in her father's absence, Salammbo fearlessly confronts the mercenaries desecrating his estate.[41] Her place is by the sacred hearth protected by his arms.

Carthaginian hearts belonged to Tanith even when necessity compelled them to revile her. Yet the terrifying realization of Carthage's precarious position usually forced them to give Moloch pride of place. As in Sparta, military necessity demanded that Ares (Moloch) be given higher official honors, but Aphrodite (Tanith) was dearest to them.[42] The Carthaginian woman did not enjoy equality of rights although -- or because -- she was at the heart of Carthaginian life. She was the center of the home for which her men fought their perpetual wars. Tanith's primacy manifests itself at the victory feast which is also Salammbo's wedding. Victorious over her enemies, Carthage can enjoy a brief idyll of peace prior to new wars:

> Behind Salammbo stretched the priests of Tanith in linen robes ... while quite in the background were the priests of Moloch ... Having thus the people at her feet, the firmament above her head, and around her the immensity of the sea, the gulf, the mountains, and the distant provinces, Salammbo in her splendour was blended with Tanith, and seemed the very genius of Carthage and its embodied soul.[43]

Only during such halcyon moments can Tanith, Carthage's maternal principle, rule openly without fear of persecution by the murderous rage of Moloch, "the tyranny of the male principle." It is characteristic of the difference between Emma and Salammbo that the latter dies nobly and piously at this moment, the culmination of her life and the life of her family and city.[44]

In Salammbo, the male principle (Moloch) rules officially, although the unofficial, but actual, deity is the female principle (Tanith). Unless given this official priority, Moloch's wrath would oppress

Carthage and not her enemies. Far from being disturbed, Moloch delights in the knowledge that Carthaginian hearts belong to Tanith and not to him. Unconcerned with their hearts, he wants pride of place in their pantheon. He asserts this priority by breaking the hearts of their leading citizens, compelling them to sacrifice the pride of their families, their sons, to appease his monstrous appetites.

Denying the holiness of Tanith's realm, the liberal gospel common to the priest and the pharmacist sees no need to enlist a Moloch to defend that realm. Emma's yearning for the sacred bonds of a pre-cosmopolitan religion makes that gospel hollow to her. Her hopeless longing is for a Carthage which officially worships a Moloch but gives its heart to a Tanith. She is far too much a woman to feel at home in regimes whose official morality encourages the unchecked "tyranny of the male principle."[45] Consequently she experiences her family and country as *unheimlich*, as destructive of home, and therefore, as monstrous. Unlike the Carthaginian Moloch, whose savagery against Tanith's realm could be mitigated, liberalism's Moloch is satisfied with nothing less than that realm's extirpation, the obliteration of its sacredness. Both priest and pharmacist seek the victory of liberalism over politics, science over philosophy, the West over the East, the rootless over the deeply rooted, the masculine over the maternal, Madame Bovary's France over Salammbo's Carthage. Demanding far more than immolation of the noblest sons, their Moloch requires that the political or philosophic meaning of family and city be erased from the soul.

Sainte-Beuve does not share Flaubert's sympathy with Carthaginian piety:

> This worship of the monstrous and bloody Moloch may possess some truth and certainly has its horror. If the author wanted to show in action one of those infamous, infernal, oppressive religions which take no account of human life, and of which Christ has rid the world, he has succeeded.[46]

Convinced that liberalism's Moloch is more bestial than Carthage's, Flaubert, in his reply, demonstrates his awareness of the crucial question to which Sainte-Beuve like his mentors, the priest and the pharmacist, is blind:

> I believe that I have made something that resembles Carthage ... But the atmosphere irritates you! I know or rather I feel this. Why, instead of remaining at your personal standpoint –

> your lettered, modern, Parisian standpoint -- why did you not come over to my side? The human soul is not the same everywhere. The slightest inspection of the world will prove the contrary. I even believe that I was not so hard upon humanity in Salammbo as in Madame Bovary. The curiosity, the love which impelled me towards vanished religions and peoples has in it something moral and sympathetic ... And then my example will be little followed ... in this country where superficiality is a quality and where the low, the facile and the silly are always applauded, adopted and adored. There is no risk in corrupting anyone in aspiring to greatness.[47]

The danger of heroic aspirations in pseudo-liberal regimes is clear in Emma's fate. Apotheosis of "the low, the facile and the silly" becomes a matter of self-defense there, much as acknowledgment of Moloch's primacy was for Carthaginians. Thus liberal enlightenment's chief teachers (Hobbes, Locke, Voltaire, etc.) sought to replace military by economic rivalry, heroic virtue by Lilliputian shrewdness. For what they regarded as moral reasons, they wanted to make the *Heimweh* afflicting Emma impossible or, at least, ridiculous. Adam Smith, for example, was a professor of morality whose doctrine of free economic competition was intended as a moral substitute for the potentially global war of all against all unleashed by popularization of liberalism's willful rebellion against political piety. That willfulness leaves all men at liberty to do whatever they please with a clear conscience. Smith believed that the monstrous possibilities inherent in this unbridled license might be gentled, if the competitiveness sanctioned by it could be channeled into peaceful, economic rivalry. The last thing he wanted was a Marxist classless society which licensed everyone to actualize the awful potentialities of liberalism's Moloch.

Pseudo-liberal enlightenment's economic substitute for war required universal education to make all men alive to the terrifying freedom responsible for the rights of man. This requirement led Rousseau to reject Smith's economic solution on the same moral grounds which led Smith to suggest it. Contending that decent political life is impossible without obfuscation of man's nihilist freedom, Rousseau praised Sparta's "happy ignorance." Unless unquestioning faith in some familial and civic piety blinds men to their liberty, anything -- no matter how bestial -- can be justified by appealing to that abyss of freedom. Consequently nothing is more conducive to bestiality than the pharmacist's attack on all pre-scientific pieties and the priest's devaluation of the

same ties in the name of a heavenly fatherland.[48] For the unbridled license at the heart of their Lilliputian solution can equally well justify destruction of that solution or of any solution.

Emma's *Heimweh*, the boredom, despair and horror which liberalism sparks in her soul, arises from her instinctive awareness that its Lilliputian mask hides a Moloch more terrible than his illiberal counterpart. Convinced that liberalism's Moloch is unappeasable, Flaubert did not indulge the vain hope which made her vulnerable to the seducer's promise of a love transcending bourgeois limits. For he was convinced that liberalism's choice is between those limits and unlimited tyranny or bestiality. The author of Madame Bovary and Salammbo knew better than to succumb to apocalyptic hopes inspired by post-bourgeois seducers. Consequently he hardly expected a Rousseauean Sparta, a Nietzschean superman or a Marxist classless society to succeed where the enlightenment's bourgeois solution failed:

> The bourgeoisie is so hopelessly confused that it no longer has even the instinct of self-preservation; and its successors will be worse. My sadness is like that of the Roman patricians of the fourth century. I feel an invincible flood of barbarism rising out of the depths. I hope to be dead before it sweeps everything away, but the period of waiting is not very agreeable.[49]

Liberal enlightenment's teachers did not initiate the liberation whose dangerous consequences they attempted to cure by prescribing economic rather than military competition. That liberation arose with scientific (Aristotle) rejection of philosophy (Socrates-Plato) whose inadequate knowledge of the good precluded its claiming to be superior to, or independent of, moral-political things. If adequate proof of science's (liberalism's) superiority is unavailable, its rebellion against illiberal piety arises from an essentially arbitrary nihilist will to throw off the sacred bonds of family and city. This nihilist willfulness, the heritage of Aristotle and Machiavelli, sparks the liberal Moloch's rage against civic and familial piety. Its hegemony is responsible for Emma's *Heimweh*, her mourning for a Tanith now exposed to the unappeasable wrath of liberalism's Moloch, "The tyranny of the male principle."

To generalize Tanith into a female principle and Moloch into a male principle is to speak the language of regimes dedicated to science's liberal rebellion against philosophic or political piety. For it interprets narrow, political gods as principles applicable to all men. Scientific

questions about justice or piety limit men to universal answers valid for all; the morality informing liberal questions presupposes the liberal answers responsible for Emma's suicide. Thus gods which originally were familial or civic must be interpreted in a global or humanitarian light, if they are to appear worthwhile on pseudo-liberal horizons. Similarly, Flaubert claims that he "was not so hard upon humanity in Salammbo as in Madame Bovary" when he means to say something which cannot be meaningfully said or even thought in liberal regimes. For Salammbo's main characters have no concern with humanity. Flaubert means to say that the pseudo-liberalism compelling the priest and the pharmacist to think scientifically (not politically or philosophically) is evil, while experiencing oneself primarily as a pious citizen of Carthage or Israel is good. Yet "good" and "evil," as Flaubert intends them, are informed neither by Carthage's divine law nor Israel's Torah, but by a liberal horizon on which, paradoxically, all liberal horizons appear in an evil light. This self-defeating defense is made from a scientific standpoint hostile to each of the familial or civic pieties defended by it! As Schmitt and Strauss realized, it is not easy to replace "the astoundingly consistent systematics of liberal thought ... by a system that does not deny the political." I believe that Emma's suicide arose ultimately from awareness that reality's nihilism precludes this replacement.

That nihilism negates the illiberal, because essentially political or philosophic, piety yearned for by Emma, Strauss and Schmitt. Unlike the more deluded Schmitt or Strauss, Emma tried to drown the horror inspired by realization of this impossibility in unlawful passions. For she divined that pseudo-liberalism's vaunted rights of man was, in reality, an invitation to its Moloch's unfettered bestiality. Her *heimweh* was her rejection of that invitation.

Chapter 29

Honest and Dishonest Enlightenment: Comments on "Enlightenment to Ideology" by Gerhart Niemeyer.[1]

> *The immoralist speaks--Nothing is more repulsive to a philosopher than man insofar as he desires or wishes ... The philosopher despises the desiring man, also the 'desirable' man -- and, in general, everything desirable, all ideals of man.*
>
> *-- Nietzsche*[2]

Professor Niemeyer interprets the Enlightenment as rebellion against god:

> The kingdom of God was replaced by the kingdom of human reason. The name of this kingdom was Rebellion, for it was from rebellion against all authority, superior norm and divine being that the new self-sufficiency of reason had originated. From this moment, every question, every word, is an act of rebellion.[3]

Professor Niemeyer interprets enlightenment reason and science as an instrument for human power. Power for what? The answer is given by his quotation from an old enlightener, Gorgias: "Nothing exists." For if nothing -- and only nothing! -- is true, then everything (or nothing) is permitted. Enlightenment reason (scientific method), honestly employed, is an instrument for producing nihilists, atheists, men alive to the fact that nothing exists and, therefore, for whom there is no "god", no being commanding the omnipotence to make anything more than nothing by giving it a permanent, non-arbitrary being or identity.

This nihilism is responsible for enlightenment science's rejection of the pre-enlightenment (ancient-medieval) sciences. Sciences not science since one science as such does not exist for pre-enlightenment men. Opposing pre-enlightenment sciences (eg., stoic, epicurean, aristotelian) are subordinated to opposing ideas of man's true good, his real self-interest. In this crucial sense, all the conflicting pre-enlightenment sciences reflect the common sense, moral-political world in which man's chief care is political, the need to secure what really is good for oneself. And when men seriously commit themselves to some ideology, some idea of the good, they rarely if ever experience their partisanship as merely partisan, as their bigotry. Whether they embrace the morality of Jesus or Socrates or Hitler or anyone else, they experience it as gospel truth, the defense of mankind against "special interests," bigots.

In his effort to proselytize his questioning and questionable ideology, Socrates discovered, to his cost, that most men consider their morality beyond question, convinced that they command an adequate grasp of what their real interest is. This sufficiency of knowledge is given them by their "gods," the moral-political authorities regnant in their regimes. Serious questioning of these authorities is regarded by their devotees as sacrilege or, in more contemporary terms, as crimes against "personkind."

Politics is the belligerent drive to empower (legitimate) one's gods, one's idea of the good, to ram it down the throats of one's enemies, by having it legislated into law and enforced by the police and army. Thus politics, morality (ideology) and religion are inseparable, if not, at bottom, identical. Political problems always are theological-political problems -- even, and particularly, for enlighteners intent upon the dishonest, but politically effective, effort to moralize (politicize) their atheism.

That atheism will remain aware of what it is, apolitical and amoral, only if its nihilism is acknowledged, a candor too horrible for pseudo-enlighteners, political enlighteners, the creators of contemporary "liberation" ideologies. Honestly confronted, enlightenment godlessness means eradication of morality and, therefore, of politics. Marx realized that extermination of religion was enlightenment's heart and, as such, the necessary prelude to extirpation of politics, the withering away of the state, and therefore, the elimination of war. For all wars are, at bottom, religious, moral-political, fired by dedication to opposing ideas of the good. For all his talk about reduction of religion-politics-morality to value-free, scientific (economic) terms, Marx still was, as Professor Niemeyer notes, political and therefore pious: "Marx wrote in the lan-

guage of science, but his message spoke of unjust systems and their end by revolution." [4] Like most so-called enlighteners, Marx's "enlightenment" was political and therefore fake.

Nietzsche, not Marx, realized the terrible cost of genuine (apolitical) enlightenment: No man, only a superman, could endure obliteration of politics, of the "spirit of revenge", from his soul. Only the superman could embrace enlightenment's apolitical, amoral horror. No man, Nietzsche realized, wants to be a superman -- anymore than Adam and Eve wanted to remain as gods haunted by the knowledge of what good and evil really are. No man wants unadulterated enlightenment. Thus only a superman would not succumb to the temptation to which Marx and other leftist and rightist (and centrist) enlighteners succumb, their need to politicize their atheism. The as yet non-existent superman would be radically apolitical and amoral because radically atheist. Only he would realize the nihilist "goal" of enlightenment science.

Enlightenment reason, scientific method, is an instrument for purging thought of faith in god, any permanent, non-arbitrary moral-political authority. As Nietzsche noted, scientific method is achieved only when all bigotries (moralities), all ideas of the good, are seen for the nothingness which they are: scientific method represents a victory over morality.[5] Consequently the only life truly in accord with scientific method would be the superman's. His victory over morality (ideology) is enlightenment's nihilist core, the only successful version of what Professor Niemeyer calls its rebellion against god, although, for its atheism, there are no gods against which to rebel: Nietzsche's superman is not Milton's Satan.

Professor Niemeyer correctly observes that enlightenment atheism is the most powerful force in modern ideologies and in the professors promulgating them. He notes that this pedagogy has brought not peace but a sword: "... only destruction, convulsions, annihilations, alienations ... and loss of common bonds of all kinds."[6] The political theologian, Carl Schmitt, was fond of quoting I Thessalonians (5:3) against the hypocrisy of the politicized enlightenment's effort to mask itself as the harbinger of universal peace and security: "For when they shall say peace and security, then sudden destruction shall come upon them ... and they shall not escape."

I agree with Professor Niemeyer, Carl Schmitt and Saint Paul about the catastrophic consequences of the dishonest effort to moralize enlightenment. Hatred and loathing is the only honest moral-political reaction to enlightenment. Insofar as a man is political, insofar as he

wants to empower his idea of
whose atheism makes desire --

All desire aims to get what
or harmful. Thus all desire is
political: it feels that somethin
main opponent of enlightenme
Consequently Nietzsche despise
thing desirable, all ideals. Pseu
willing to confront the real ene
sions, a confrontation brought
Venice) by Dionysus.

Desire's spirited rebellion
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grateful because there is nothi
worth securing. Professor Nieme
lightenment could bring peace
moral-political void, in which
usually obfuscated, goal.

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if it should, I disagree with thos
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(ideologies) are such weapons, p
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indoctrinators of America's lead
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hreats would only fuel the hot o
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Utopian dreams of domestic
or their implementation a miracu
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dmission about anything is prec
ghtenment, his knowledge that n
xists. Thus that miraculous divin
heart would be relapse into pre

in god, in some non-arbitrary ideology (idea of the good). Like Faust's bet with Mephisto, the ungrateful biped's ingratitude springs from determination not to suffer that relapse.

This determination triggers passion's spirited hatred of reason, science. Politicized enlightenment's crusades strive to make enlightenment palatable to passion, to give it "redeeming social value", by obfuscating that hatred and the moral-political need for it. Thus the dishonest effort to enlist enlightenment (liberation) in political causes, in the drive to destroy one's enemies by empowering one's ideology, one's idea of the good. And there always are opposing ideologies and therefore potential, if not actual, pretexts for civil and foreign wars. Honest (as opposed to political) enlighteners admit that their real fight is internal, not external, the implacable hatred of desire -- any desire -- for science and the reality uncovered by it. Insofar as crusaders against racism and sexism have the courage to confront what personkind's liberation truly means, their enemy becomes their own passions, the unappeasable wrath of the ungrateful biped, not those arbitrarily branded as racist or sexist.

So long as enlighteners fail to recognize their own outraged passions as the main enemy of the liberation, their fear of their nihilism will continue to seize any pretext to tyrannically denounce partisans of opposing pretexts (moralities) as enemies of personkind. This cowardly unwillingness to confront their own moral emptiness permits them to lose themselves in crusades for personkind. These crusades will continue to do what Professor Niemeyer says that they always have done: " ... to reap nothing that looks like salvation, only destruction, convulsions, annihilations ... and loss of common bonds of all kinds."[7]

Enlightenment's core is nihilism, annihilation. But only honest (apolitical) enlighteners can admit enlightenment's moral void to themselves -- and perhaps the need for a superman capable of enduring it without despair or degeneration.

In the superman's absence or impossibility, the honest response of passion to enlightenment is the Underground Man's, the ungrateful biped's loathing for a reason and a reality which leaves him nothing for which to be grateful:

> Shower upon man every blessing, drown him in a sea of happiness, so that nothing but bubbles of bliss can be seen on the surface; give him economic prosperity, such that he should have nothing to do but sleep, eat cakes and busy himself with the continuation of his species, and then out of sheer ingratitude, sheer spite, man would play you some dirty trick. He would risk his cakes and would deliberately desire the most

fatal rubbish, the most une
launch a curse upon the wo
privilege, the primary disti
animals) ... it may be at the
nibalism! ... Man likes to m
has a passionate love of des
he loves chaos and destru
afraid of attaining his objec
constructing? [8]

Chapter 30

Review of The Political Ideas of Leo Strauss by Shadia B. Drury[1]

Professor Drury attacks what she calls Mr. Strauss' political ideas. She is wrong about both Strauss' two most important conflicts, those with Klein (Aristotle) and Schmitt, and about the fight over Strauss' legacy between Jaffa and Pangle, Bloom, Walter Berns, etc. Both errors spring from the same source, a blindness shared by Drury with most professors of "philosophy" -- the inability to see the moral-political core of all serious thought about anything.

Like his teacher, Socrates, Strauss believed that the main question confronting all men at all times ("What is good for me?") is moral-political and therefore is answered theologically (as it usually is) or asked philosophically (as it rarely is). Professor Drury's attack on Mr. Strauss is a theological attack on philosophy.

Like Professor Drury, most men believe they know adequately what is good for them, how they should live. The more strongly they feel that they know this, the less they are inclined to consider their morality questionable. Thus, usually without admitting it, they presuppose knowledge of a god, a non-arbitrary standard of good and evil, right and wrong. As the political theologian, Schmitt, rightly noted in his Political Theology: Without theology, no morality and without morality, no politics! Politics is legislated morality, supported by the police and army -- and god!

Drury wrongly accuses Schmitt and Strauss of advocating a Machiavellian "autonomy of politics from morality."[2] The difference between them is that Schmitt is a theologian and Strauss, a philosopher. Schmitt believed that his Christian faith revealed what truly was good for him. As a philosopher, Strauss was moved by the sting of the

awareness of lacking an adequate answer to the question of questions: Should I live theologically (morally-politically) or philosophically (serious questioning of the morality-piety informing my "cave")? Unlike theologians (moral-political men), philosophers cannot and do not moralize their philosophy -- for that would mean its transformation into theology (politics). Drury's theology informs her attack on Strauss.

The same theology is responsible for her contention that Strauss' criticism of Klein "implies a radical depreciation of morality."[3] Like Aristotle, Klein believes that philosophic-scientific virtue is better than moral-political virtue. He therefore moralized (politicized) free inquiry (theoretical virtue) as theologians always do; he demanded that liberal education be mainly philosophic not political. Thus Strauss rightly observed that morality enjoyed a higher, a less questionable status, for Klein (or Schmitt or Drury), a theologian, than for Strauss, a philosopher.[4]

Contrary to Drury's view,[5] Aristotle believed that "the excellence of the philosopher does not require moral virtue" except as a means to the end of his theological virtue.[6] In general, Drury is unaware that her opposition to Strauss is a variation of Strauss' conflict with Schmitt, Klein and Aristotle. For her, Bloom and Pangle are Strauss' real heirs while the political philosopher, Jaffa, represents Strauss' moral-political (exoteric) window dressing. The political theologian, Schmitt, knew better than Bloom or Pangle what philosophy is and why it must be rejected by theologians (moral-political men).

Chapter 31

Feminist Propaganda at Scripps College:
An Interview with Miss Shelly Rondeau

All college public relations statements share one common characteristic: there is not the slightest hint in them of what the real life of the college is ... As far as public relations departments are concerned, professors are all so many Mr. (and Ms.) Chips with our quaint and lovable idiosyncrasies and esoteric ... but highly praiseworthy ... scholarship. No one, reading official college publications, would have any inkling of the rancid passions, the dislike, animosity, antipathy and sheer loathing, with which college faculties ... and their student followers ... look upon each other. The conflicts within the political arena ... even such as Watergate or Irangate or those centered around Judge Bork and Senator Tower ... are tepid and polite compared to those in the academy!

-- *Harry Victor Jaffa*[1]

"The purpose of a school is the impossible job of getting students and teachers to be intellectually honest, to abandon their moral-political illusions (moral-political commitment always is self-delusion) and see reality for what it unfortunately is," says Harry Neumann, professor of philosophy. Neumann says he does not care whether Scripps is or remains a women's college. "That makes no difference academically. Feminism and its crusades, like all contemporary 'liberation' movements, are inspired by pseudo-liberal propaganda not by intellectual honesty! (words such as 'sexism', 'racism', 'homophobia' are political battle cries and, as such, intellectually worthless).

"The 'consciousness raising' peddled by the faculties and administrations of most colleges and universities is nothing but political indoctrination, brain washing: 'One of the most notable recent additions to campus life has been something called 'consciousness raising' ... Its purpose is the elimination of the unholy trinity of 'racism, sexism and homophobia' ... To understand what 'consciousness raising' is, let us turn first to 'racism.' To eliminate this evil has nothing whatever to do with combating racial discrimination ... On the contrary it means demanding racial quotas, in admissions to colleges and universities and professional schools. It means demanding race quotas for faculties, corporations, labor unions, government agencies. Beyond this, however, it may also mean demanding a higher minimum wage, government subsidized abortion on demand, government health insurance, government child care centers, low cost housing, paid maternity -- and paternity -- leaves, etc. etc. It may also mean an end to nuclear testing, and an end to S.D.I., and cuts in the defense budget. If you ask what all these things have to do with 'racism,' the answer is that by asking the question you show that you need to have your consciousness raised!

'Racism' is any kind of resistance, conscious or unconscious, to the political program of the ideological left. Having one's consciousness 'raised' means learning to respond on cue -- whether cheering or booing -- to the symbolic forms in which the demands of the 'movement' are expressed. The most perfect expression I know of, of a group having its consciousness raised, is that of the massed ranks at Nuremberg responding to Hitler with 'Sieg Heil.' Of course there were those, recalcitrant, and out of sight, who were also having their consciousness raised by the Gestapo. Indeed, until recently, consciousness raising was called brain washing.'[2]

"That brain washing characterizes all desires and, therefore, all moral-political life. It is the heart of illiberalism and of pseudo-liberalism's despicable unwillingness to make a clean and total break with illiberalism. Liberal education is propelled by the determination to make that break without compromise or die trying! It means willingness to confront desire's -- any desire's -- implacable hatred of reason (science, liberalism). For that hatred will settle for nothing except victory (over reason) or death. In this spirit, Goethe's Faust makes his bet with the devil: he will be dead, enslaved to his feelings and their moral-political delusion, if he is dumb enough to find happiness in anything. There is no happiness because nothing is really good or worthwhile.

"Despising pseudo-liberalism's (political liberalism's) consciousness raising, its contemptible parodies of real liberation, Faust's bet

springs from awareness of freedom's terrifying price: a man can be happy or free, never both! Freedom means the perpetual horror of having one's mind bombarded by one's most cherished passions, a 'Verdun' without respite. But to scientists, men serious about their liberation, and therefore contemptuous of consciousness raising, this war to the death 'is less costly than slavery. An old truth which every event confirms. The choice always is between Verdun and Dachau!'[3]

"Like most 'colleges', Scripps dispenses 'consciousness raising,' the intellectual cowardice clinging to pseudo-liberal (political liberal) opiates (e.g., crusades against 'racism, sexism and homophobia'). My tenure at Scripps has provided the conditions -- always battlefield conditions! -- for finding what I think true academically or intellectually (which is crucial for me) and even politically (which is secondary, if not trivial). To paraphrase Heraclitus: war, not peace, is the father of rational insight -- the war of passion and its spiritedness against reason. Men dreaming of colleges as idyllic refuges from 'real life' (and the professor as good old Mr. Chips) are either deluded donors or belong to the vast academic *hoi polloi*, those propagating the regnant pseudo-liberal nonsense as gospel truth.

"Since opposition to that nonsense is weak, if not non-existent, its high priests, most professors, see college life as their peaceful dialogues disturbed only by a few unconscionable 'special interests,' bigots to be exterminated lest they corrupt the youth. The overwhelming endorsement of this brain washing makes the 'liberations' sanctioned by it seem self evidently right. Thus any real diversity on campus is crushed by partisans of a 'diversity awareness' which tolerates only pseudo-liberal orthodoxy, not its opponents. This hypocrisy is intellectual slavery, and therefore very successful propaganda, not education.

"Liberal education means forcing oneself -- and it always is a forcing -- to see this nonsense as nonsense, that is, to see its crusade against 'special interests' as nothing more than a senseless fight between opposing bigotries, neither of which is supported by anything but arbitrary whim (morality).

"Academic life and its fights are loathsome affairs, sparked ultimately by a 'malignant anger ... a calm cold reasonable anger and therefore the most revolting and most terrible possible.' Only their cowardice, intellectual dishonesty, saves professors from this always unwelcome self-knowledge. They are unwilling to confront the ugly reality of their business; fearing the fate of Stavrogin or Ahab.

"That fear is responsible for the overwhelming success of the pseudo-liberal propaganda dispensed by college public relations de-

partments and taught by most professors. Liberal education is liberation from this terror and the pseudo-liberal 'liberations' arising from it. My fight against this cowardice and its perpetrators has enjoyed no victories, nor do I expect any. It is far easier to wallow in pseudo-liberal delusions than to confront reality's nihilism. Who would not choose to see himself as a champion of mankind and justice against bigots and their special interests! In any case, the appeal to donors, perspective indoctrinees (students), and the indoctrinated (alumni) is self-evident.

"Some of the hostility between Neumann and his enemies has stemmed from feminist attitudes. "I'm not against anyone who says, 'I'm for feminism because that's the way I feel.' But if anyone says, 'I'm for feminism because it's really right,' that's a swindle! Morality and prejudice mean the same thing. To elevate one morality above another as if it were in some way objectively right, that is swindle! That's how I understand a strong defense of feminism -- as if there's some kind of non- arbitrary right. I don't think anyone has a right to anything.

"I always say 'man' and 'he' at Scripps instead of 'he/she' to bring out the point of the opposite prejudice. To say 'he/she' is no more honest or fair than to say 'he.' They're both bigotries as are all moral-political commitments."

"Neumann continues to teach at Scripps "because schools are places where one has more time to reflect. But schools are basically places of war, not peace. There are irreconcilable life and death antagonisms there -- we can talk about them, but they remain irreconcilable. At Scripps, I represent the other point of view, the only real 'diversity' on a campus claiming to promote 'diversity awareness!' My own position, liberalism (nihilism), represents this diversity, the effort to make schools as honest as possible. School is not, nor should it be, a pleasant or enjoyable thing. Intellectual honesty, self knowledge or knowledge of one's world, is harsh and repellent. It is the heart breaking lesson learned by the first liberally educated men, Adam and Eve, when in Genesis (3), they succumbed to the satanic temptation to reject god (any non-arbitrary moral-political authority). Their subsequent horror of nakedness, of reality's nihilism, led them to abandon liberal-scientific education for 'consciousness-raising' -- as it caused Bukharin to confess to crimes which he had not committed and Hess to deify a monster. For similar reasons, Eve did not organize the first N.O.W. when god forced women to be subordinate to men, nor did Adam organize an AFL-CIO to protest god's forcing men to work. Like Hess and Bukharin, they would have accepted any punishment, however harsh, rather than be as

gods haunted by the knowledge of what good and evil really are. That liberal (nihilist) knowledge, the core of real education, is too horrible for grovelers to stomach! This cowardice is responsible for the enslavement of most professors to the pseudo-liberal bigotries informing American schools. Thus even -- and especially -- if communism's evil empire collapses, those bigotries will receive global dissemination by America's main propaganda agencies, its colleges and universities."

Chapter 32

Nihilism at Scripps College: Pseudo-Liberal Propaganda as Humanist Education

> *The intellectuals often tend to be subjective and individualistic, impractical in their thinking and irresolute in action until they have thrown themselves heart and soul into mass revolutionary struggles, or made up their minds to serve the interests of the masses and become one with them.*
>
> *-- Mao Tse-Tung*

The faculty task force report on humanities at Scripps (1985) can offer what the president wants, "a program that shows clear direction and definition" and which is "pedagogically sound" only if it rejects the leftist propaganda informing much of it. As it stands, it is a mixture of that propaganda and serious education.

First the serious education: I believe that the report rightly maintains that "knowledge must be seen as <u>always</u> in the process of revision rather than made up of fixed entities called `facts' ... the answers to some of our most pressing questions will vary depending on who is asking ... " I underline "always" and would substitute "all" for "some" ("of our most pressing questions"). This means that, for genuine education, there are no "fixed entities," no facts only interpretations, points of view, opinions -- or, to put it more harshly, only conflicting prejudices, bigotries and biases or, if you will "values." There is no fixed, impartial "objective" standard permitting one to honestly say anything is true or false, right or wrong, progress or regress. Consequently I agree with the report's rejection of any effort to establish an over-all historical progress whether toward a world-state (Toynbee) or to the city of god (Augustine) or to the universal classless society (Marx) -- or a universal decline (Rousseau, Spengler). Any "single, unified and

anything else arises from the ill
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onal, very prejudiced biases.
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t progress and/or regress. The left-
eport are obvious.
of the humanities requirement" and
s, the assertion that "we do not see

that this process can or should be reversed" (my underlining). But if no "fixed entities" exist, nothing is irreversible.

4. The assertion of "rightly irreversible" curricular demands in relation to leftist (that is, pseudo-academic) pieties about women's liberation and black liberation. Again the resort to fixed or irreversible educational demands!

These four examples point to the evident leftist propaganda informing the report. This propaganda is at odds with what seems to me "pedagogically sound" in it. Two more examples show that political thrust clearly:

1. The pseudo-liberal assertion of the "increasing importance of social and economic history." Their importance is further emphasized in a footnote quotation. There "social realism in modern history" is said to be a compound of economic and social history which have steadily progressed "to their present position of preeminence as the appropriate dimensions of a truly democratic history." For "democratic" here, it would be more honest to say "leftist" as opposed to "rightist."

2. The assertion of "women's studies as an academic unit, one which does not merely add another perspective to those of history, literature, art, philosophy and the like, but calls for a process of transformation of the very content and outlook of the traditional disciplines themselves." As I said when discussing feminism, the Scripps moral-political prejudice making a priority of such studies (women's studies, ethnic studies) is pseudo-liberalism. My prejudices dictate the priority of destroying communism and its influence. If that priority (or any other serious political concern) dominated education, it would transform "the content and outlook of the traditional disciplines" as much as women's studies. Again it depends on "who is asking," that is, on whose bigotry manages to make itself authoritative.

That so-called "truly democratic history" which the authors of the report evidently endorse will, when they succeed, make Scripps a leftist propaganda institute. Thus their "rightly irreversible" curricular demands are for women's and ethnic studies courses, not for courses in how to destroy communism. For them, anti-communist courses are rightist propaganda (as indeed they are!). However, they do not admit that their own academic priorities, their "truly democratic history," is leftist propaganda.

We, the authors of the report and I, never will agree on our respective moral-political prejudices, although in a world devoid of "fixed entities," we should be able to see them as mere prejudices and nothing more. That insight seems to me to go to the heart of the "sound peda-

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history." In reality it was an arbitrary decision by arbitrary individuals, as all human decisions are, which can and would be reversed by men not sharing their leftist bias. Let us take individual responsibility for our bigotries – let us see them for the bigotries they always are! -- and not try to pass them off as historical necessities, god's will, true "diversity awareness" or some other variety of "fixed entities." I prefer Kierkegaard's frank admission that his moral-religious faith was a desperate leap into impossibility.

Such a leap will not satisfy most professors, enslaved as they are to the regnant pseudo-liberal "consciousness raising." Real teachers and students will see that it is intellectual honesty. If morality means anything, it means a man's willingness to take responsibility for his acts and not blame them on social injustice (racism, sexism, etc.), god, genes, mental disease, evolution, etc. If one's ancestors preferred slavery or prison to death that was their free choice! It was not the choice of a Patrick Henry or of that wonderful Chinese student who opposed his unarmed self to the tyrant's tanks in Peking (June, 1989)!

Whether heroic or cowardly, one's choice and one's responsibility for it are one's own -- not dependent on or exonerated by anything external -- e.g. by membership in some oppressed social (racial, religious, sexual) class or by one's youth (Mérimée, Mateo Falcone) or by the craven excuse that insanity is a moral-legal, not a "scientific" concept or that addiction is a disease and not the addict's fault. These are cowardly evasions of self-knowledge.

No man is anything but an arbitrary emptiness; he is not a member or part of anything: there are no "fixed entities or facts." Whatever he does always arises from his own willful choice. Nothing in heaven or on earth gives that choice an objective, non-arbitrary ("scientific") *raison d'être*: god is dead! Nobody has a right to anything. The damned in Dante's Hell are more honest than Dante insofar as they realize this. Thus I see no reason why society should compensate ("affirmative action") the descendants of people who preferred slavery and its consequences to death. Theirs was not the choice of that heroic Chinese student or the Jews of medieval Mainz or those Polish cavalry or German infantry who preferred death to dishonor. Whether manly, cowardly or indifferent, human choices are always arbitrary life and death decisions; "society" is not to blame. If education has a basic ethical lesson, it is to teach that morality's heart is refusal to evade the always personal responsibility for what one does. The report shares the vice of most contemporary education insofar as it sees its leftist goals as more than the pseudo-liberal bigotries which they are. It attempts to find objective

justification for its arbitrary willfulness. Such dishonesty seems to work in politics; it has no place in liberal education: there are no "fixed entities called facts" -- including, and especially, moral-political facts!

To sum up: the report offers Scripps a basically leftist humanities curriculum (and presumably in the disciplines too) -- those "rightly irreversible demands" and that "truly democratic history." I would counter with a rightist curriculum. But far more honest than both, it seems to me, would be a humanities curriculum reminding itself (and all its subordinate disciplines) that there are no "fixed entities" and, therefore, that all decisions about anything are, in reality, arbitrary and biased. Such a "clear direction and definition" surely would not catapult Scripps into "intellectual leadership ... in the humanities both in Claremont and among small colleges nationally." But it would, I believe, allow us to do all that honest students and teachers can do in a world without "fixed entities."

I realize that this demand for honesty in education is vain. Its success is precluded by the cowardly unwillingness of pseudo-liberals to confront their own nihilism. That unwillingness dominates practically all contemporary education, confirming Nietzsche's insight that error is not blindness; error is cowardice.

This cowardice's meaning was brought home to me in an article in the Scripps College Bulletin (Summer, 1986) by Professor Fadem of Scripps College defending propaganda (the new Scripps "humanities" program) as education. That magazine's editor refused to publish the following criticism of Professor Fadem, although -- or because! -- I was the harshest enemy of the pseudo-liberal bigotry defended by him. When I informed him of her refusal, he said that it showed her wisdom. Here is the note which I sent to her along with the criticism of Professor Fadem's propaganda: "Attached is my criticism of Professor Fadem's defense of the `new humanities.' I was and am the strongest voice against the change in the humanities. To be sure, as your note states, this is my view just as that was Fadem's. At any rate, Scripps alumnae should know that there are powerful and irreconcilable differences about this most crucial aspect of Scripps' education." As I said in my note on feminism at Scripps schools are war-like, not peaceful, places! I see dangerous academic enemies in those "liberals" whose unwillingness to accept their liberalism's nihilism makes them pseudo-liberals, still clinging to ancient-medieval pieties discredited by that nihilism. Professor Fadem is an example of this pseudo-liberalism informing college and university faculties. Here is my (1986) rejected

criticism of his defense of the latest Scripps pseudo-liberal obfuscation of liberal education.

Professor Fadem's praise of the most recent emasculation of Scripps' humanities program presents no real reason for rejecting the old program. Indeed he is compelled to resort to the old program's "moral certainties" for any possible justification of the "labyrinthine doubts" informing his new humanities. This is not just a problem for Fadem or for Scripps; it haunts the "revolutionary intellectual change" to which Fadem demands that "the humanities program, as the basis of education at Scripps, must take the lead in being hospitable". I believe that there is no need whatsoever for this hospitality except the arbitrary will of Fadem and his pseudo-liberal allies to have it so.

The new humanities' essential nihilism is apparent both in Fadem's article and in the original faculty (1985) task force report advocating the "revolutionary change." To be sure, it is evident only in those passages which do not hide the new humanities' nihilist nakedness behind the usual pseudo-liberal fig leaves, those "moral certainties" shaping the old humanities.

I will concentrate on two such passages, one from the report and one from Fadem's article:

1. "Our new philosophy has raised the prospect that there is no escape from language, that we cannot get beyond or outside language to an `objective' reality. Humbert Humbert's half- forlorn, half-contented murmur, `O, my Lolita, I have only words to play with' may represent the dilemma facing all of us ... We cannot reach the upper landscape of some unambiguous, non-linguistic reality outside the text." (Fadem)

2. "Knowledge must be seen as always in the process of revision rather than made up of fixed entities called facts." (Report)

Lest one suppose that Fadem's statement is merely about literary texts and is, therefore, less comprehensive than the quotation from the Report, he insists that "text" covers all things human: "Everything human is now perceived as text." The two statements share the same nihilism: so far as men are concerned, there are no facts, no objective realities but only opinions, interpretations, points of view, ways or methods of viewing. All anyone has is his own idiotic, idiosyncratic perceptions, thoughts, feelings. Everything human is bias, bigotry, prejudice. In this nihilist hell, there is nothing more bigoted - and therefore more effective as propaganda! - than the claim to want liberation from bigotry, to want non-bigoted, impersonal knowledge. For there is nothing - and only nothing! - in, above or behind things which gives them a non-arbitrary, permanent significance: God is dead! Life is a

tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, or of apathy, signifying nothing.

This nihilism informs the propaganda which Fadem and the Report embrace. But these nihilists rarely display Nietzsche's honesty about their nihilism's horror. Instead they peddle a pseudo-liberal propaganda which makes their nihilism seem "liberating," "invigorating," "noble" and even "effective in contributing to the moral or cultural understanding." What drivel!

Nothing is less moral or political, more destructive of all cultural or moral-political ties, than the unacknowledged nihilism sparking Fadem's new humanities. This is so whatever those ties may be: democratic, communist or nazi; racist or humanitarian; feminist or sexist; Christian, Jew or Moslem. Any effort to hide the new humanities' nihilist nakedness behind moral-political fig leaves is dishonest; any effort to make the new humanities seem "noble," "enriching," "liberating," "humanitarian." This is precisely what the Report and Fadem's paper do. Indeed how else could their nihilism have captured Scripps' faculty, administration, alumnae and trustees?

As I noted in discussing feminism at Scripps, this propaganda is a swindle, however successful it may be. When asked about hiring a philosopher at Scripps, I strongly supported someone such as Professor Jaffa (CMC) or one of his students. Jaffa really believes in those old "moral certainties," in, for example, the Declaration of Independence's old-fashioned faith that nature and nature's god endow all men with unalienable rights to life and liberty. For he realizes that if no such god or "objective reality" exists, nobody has a right to anything! Consequently he decries the nihilism, "the radical skepticism that marks much of 20th century thought" (Fadem) as stupid, immoral and barbaric.

I believe that Fadem's half-hearted nihilism reveals a better grasp of reality than Jaffa's resort to nature and nature's god. But this grasp is vitiated by its dishonesty or halfheartedness, its need for moral-political approval preventing abandonment of those old "moral certainties" so dear to Jaffa -- and to pseudo-liberals, liberals too cowardly to accept their basic nihilism.

I would like to have a Jaffa always confronting the dominant faction at Scripps, those who, like Fadem, use Jaffa's "moral certainties" to sell a new revolutionary humanities destructive of those very certainties. Fadem is both more honest and more accurate when he describes the new humanities' main disciplines as a piratical or criminal ("buccaneering") challenge to "the spiritual and the sacerdotal in the

humanities." But such honesty is rare in an encomium celebrating the riches of what is, in reality, the direst poverty:

> I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot: I wish you were cold or hot. So then because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spit you out of my mouth! Because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and do not realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.[1]

Chapter 33

Who Should Teach Philosophy at Scripps College?

During our conversations, I did most of the talking. Heidegger's tendency was to remain silent ... From the beginning our relationship was devoid of enthusiasm. It was not grounded in the depths of our nature ... He said, in a slightly angered tone, that it was foolish to have so many professors of philosophy; one should keep only two or three in the whole of Germany. `Which ones then?' I inquired. No answer.

-- Karl Jaspers[1]

This note explains my rejection of the usual candidates to teach philosophy (or humanities) at Scripps, although -- or because -- they would be acceptable to most orthodox contemporary teachers of "philosophy." I asked Jaffa to meet the candidates and to write his evaluation of them for the same reason that I asked him to teach our joint courses. I regard him as one of the very few philosophic teachers in existence today.

The candidates soon reveal the emptiness at the core of their pseudo-liberal cleverness and sophistication. They are, like most professors pseudo-liberals, liberals too cowardly to confront their nihilism. They are not philosophic! When I make statements such as this somebody usually counters with "But that just reflects your opinion or prejudice about what it means to be a scientist or a philosopher" or some such remark. I would agree with this observation, but I would add that whatever anyone believes -- especially about the crucial life or death issues -- always is his own prejudice. Nor do I believe that there is anything unbiased about the claim that everyone has a right to his own opinion. This claim (that everyone has such a right) is no less bigoted,

unless it is not just another claim or bias, but is an objective moral absolute negating as false all contrary claims. Jaffa, with whom I have been arguing in our joint class all this term, believes in such moral absolutes (he calls them natural or divine rights). I do not.

Except for rare exceptions of intellectual honesty, moral-political life (that is, all human life) is a hot or cold war between opposing bigotries which are considered by each of the warring factions not as bigotries but as gospel truth: only the enemy is the bigot, not one's own righteous commitment! Whether communist, democratic or nazi, apartheid or anti-apartheid, each moral-political faction perceives itself as the party of truth and its enemies as in league with the devil!

Rarely do they muster the courage to realize their own bigotry as Hess and Bukharin did. Instead they, usually without admitting it (pseudo-liberals), presuppose "gods," permanent, non-arbitrary standards, permitting them to distinguish genuine morality from bigotry. In good conscience, they can then castigate their opponents as racist, sexist, homophobic, etc. It constitutes a considerable political victory to infiltrate the public speech with such terms (weapons) which degrade one's opponents to enemies of the genuine humanity represented, of course, by one's own righteousness. Such terms are political weapons designed to present one's bigotry as a crusade on behalf of genuine tolerance, love, "diversity awareness" and other "consciousness-raising." For the "diversity" here never includes tolerance or love for the enemies of such tolerance or love! Its pseudo-liberalism is political, a war to destroy its enemies, a war fought, of course, in the name of universal peace and justice (see the Wettergreen quotation about contemporary democratic "liberation" movements, above, Introduction).

Naturally those enemies are branded as "special interests," "elitists," bigots preventing the progress of mankind! One's own cause never is a "special interest!" No teacher worthy of the name participates in this swindle endemic to contemporary schools. No serious teacher of philosophy regards any morality as more than bigotry!

The intellectual honesty of a Bukharin or a Hess, a Beckmann or a Grammaté, is rare. It is politically insignificant, since political men refuse to see their morality as arbitrary willfulness, bigotry, a "special interest," no better and no worse than that of their most deadly foes. Because they view their morality as truly good, they demand its political empowerment. Politics is morality legislated and enforced by military-police power. Unlike Hess and Bukharin, most grovelers do not view this enforcement as tyrannic, but as the victory of truth and justice

over "special interests;" a fight to empower their morality against racist, sexist, homophobic bigots.

Only genuine liberalism, the intellectual toughness of a Hess or Bukharin, liberates morality or politics from religion, from faith in a "god," a permanent, non-arbitrary moral standard. Liberals despise those "fishing in the murky waters of values and universals." Immune to illiberal and pseudo-liberal siren songs, they know that nothing legitimates their politics or morality except their willful resolve.

I mention all this because opponents of my moral or philosophic taste often tell me what I freely acknowledge without their prompting -- that my views are my tastes or "values," based on nothing but my taste. However they are unwilling to say the same of their usually pseudo-liberal claims (about everyone's right to his own opinion or morality -- the words "opinion" and "morality" mean the same).

I disagree strongly with Marcuse on crucial points. However I agree just as strongly with his contention (in Repressive Tolerance) that nobody really is tolerant; all tolerance is repressive or intolerant, depending on whose ox is being gored. For example, those who would give every man a right to his opinion generally are intolerant of men who deny that all or most men have this right. This intolerance exists in their hearts whether they admit it or not. Schools are funny, quixotic places in which the fantastically difficult effort is made by students and teachers to be really tolerant -- tolerant in one's heart and soul -- of all moralities, especially those which seem most repellent to our strongest moral bigotries ("moral" and "bigoted" mean the same thing). Since nothing goes more against the grain, this effort requires constant opposition against the teacher's or student's all-too-human urge to condemn opposing moralities as intolerable or immoral. The fight -- and it always is a fight -- against this urge is the only serious reason to be a student or teacher; the rest is academic window-dressing; pseudo-liberal sophistication. This fight, no less than the refusal to engage in it, arises from moral bias: the intellectual's desire for academic freedom is no less bigoted than communist, democratic or nazi suppression of that freedom. It is simply the main moral bias of schools, of students and teachers (not an absolute truth, just another bias -- but a bias for which real students and teachers are prepared to die, if necessary). As such it is the heart and soul of any school at any time.

A philosopher's job in schools is to remind first himself and then if possible all students and teachers that their most cherished claims are only prejudices. I see my philosophic (not scientific or nihilist) service to Scripps mainly, if not exclusively in my opposition to the bigotries

dominating Scripps (and most schools) in the last dozen years: the anti-Viet-Nam War movement, women's liberation, homosexual liberation, black liberation. I do not oppose them as merely moral positions, that is, as personal or interpersonal biases. I have opposed the Scripps administration, faculty and students insofar as they regard them as more than mere bigotries.

This opposition has not, and was not intended to, make me popular at Scripps. For example, the day after the Kent State killings, I was the only teacher openly to oppose condemnation of the soldiers. I told the assembled mob that they must know of some natural or divine right which makes it always unjust for soldiers to shoot students (since it was only the day after the shootings and no formal inquiry had taken place. The issue is still debated). I denied the existence of such objective grounds for right and wrong. I am a scientist or nihilist, a genuine liberal, not a true believer! Similarly, there was much indignation among her allies when I asked a feminist professor at Scripps why it would be wrong to put women back in harems rather than give them equality.

I have asked -- and seriously asked -- these unpopular questions because the dominant elements (at Scripps) are convinced that men have a moral right -- not just a bigoted claim -- to be liberated from slavery, concentration camps and harems. I believe that this conviction at Scripps (and at most schools) is another example of moral conformity. In this case it is conformity to a government whose "sacred" founding document, its Declaration of Independence, clearly asserts those moral rights.

What we need at Scripps is not philosophy teachers who, at heart, share the present Scripps' pseudo-liberal commitment to its dominant moral bigotries -- that all men are created equal, that all have a right to their life, liberty, and opinions, etc. I believe this conviction is basically nihilist since it is not grounded in an objective divine or natural right -- in a right not subject to change by human freedom or creativity. Such claims are, I believe grounded in nothing but the will or whim of the man claiming them -- hence atheism or nihilism. (I know I said "man" as I have used "man" or "his" throughout this note. This seems to me proper philosophic usage in "schools" such as Scripps devoted to women's equality. It would be philosophically improper in schools devoted to harems for women.)

Because I am a nihilist or realist (I prefer "realist," if realism means liberal rejection of things which do not really exist -- things such as rights to life or freedom as distinct from prejudices in favor of life or freedom), I like to test my arguments against consistent anti-nihilists or

anti-realists. That is why I am teaching the joint courses with Jaffa. Some people have gotten the wrong idea about these courses. We do not teach them because we share conservative leanings. The crucial issue is that I see these leanings as tastes or prejudices and nothing more, while Jaffa believes that they are based on an objective, natural standard of justice.

Jaffa is more consistent than those who seek to justify their liberal (nihilist) leanings by loudly shouting that all men are entitled to their life, liberty and opinions. He realizes that the claim to universal human equality denies that all are entitled to their opinion -- insofar as an opinion denies that all men are equal. As Marcuse rightly noted, all tolerance is repressive. Thus Jaffa believes that the only valid opinions are those grounded in what he calls natural right. His liberal conservatism (not mine) is sparked by the contention that "nature and nature's god" entitle all men equally to the right to live and to be free. However he agrees with me that rejection of any natural or divine order results in nihilism. [Hence our course. Socrates (Jaffa) or Nihilism (Neumann)?.]

Now what I suggest about hiring a philosopher is this: Scripps needs someone like Jaffa -- a consistent moral absolutist (philosopher) or, as I call him, an anti-realist. Like most teachers (including practically all contemporary professional "philosophers"), the Scripps faculty usually are pseudo-liberals, inconsistent nihilists or realists -- while I am a liberal, a consistent realist (scientist) or nihilist (as I said I see it as my academic duty to try to regard this realism as just another bias). Unlike Jaffa, most at Scripps reject any sort of divine or natural objective basis for their liberalism which consequently is nihilist, grounded in nothing but their bias or whim.

We should try to balance Scripps' nihilism (pseudo-liberalism) with a consistent anti-nihilist (philosopher), a Jaffa or, since he already has a job, one of his most thoughtful students. We at Scripps need someone like Jaffa desperately to balance my consistent, and my enemies' inconsistent or unconscious, nihilist biases. Precisely because pseudo-liberal feminist and homosexual rights candidates are so attractive to the dominant faction at Scripps, they should be rejected. If men want to be liberal, really "liberated," they must liberate themselves from the pseudo-liberal cowardice obfuscating their nihilism. Nothing goes more against the grain!

I am under no illusions about the fate of this recommendation. The dominant elements in the Scripps administration and faculty will reject it! Their pseudo-liberalism, panders to the universal cowardice responsible for transformation of education into "consciousness raising." Like

philosophy itself, schools are desperate, impossible enterprises easily degraded into propaganda institutes for their most cherished prejudices. My recommendation was meant to prevent this transformation at Scripps, as if indeed it still could have been prevented! To be sure, in reality's nihilism, anything is possible. But I realize that success in this effort is as impossible as a liberally educated Singleton (above, end of Bloom review). As Strauss wisely observed, political legitimation of philosophy, of free inquiry, is detrimental to philosophy's health (above, end of appendix to Bloom review). Nothing contributes more to this disease than the contemporary higher education responsible for Nietzsche's utopian dream: "I would drive out of my ideal state the so called 'educated' just as Plato drove out the poets; this is my terrorism!"[2]

Chapter 34

Proposal for Research Grant from NEH (1984)

How can institutions as thoroughly corrupt as our universities be a source of moral improvement!
-- Harry Victor Jaffa

The heart of my research is the the conflict between the sciences or humanities (I do not distinguish between them) and politics. Science or genuinely liberal education is a dagger pointed at sound political practice: Liberal education liberates from all moral-political restraints. To meet this threat, politics must suppress, insofar as possible, all scientific-humanist education. This suppression is nothing new. It is mankind's usual practice from Socrates to Solzhenitsyn. However modern science has radicalized the political need for severe censorship to an extent previously unknown.

Science (*scientia*) always has meant knowledge of reality. Modern, in contrast to ancient-medieval, science denies that reality provides non-arbitrary standards to guide moral-political life. As Nietzsche rightly noted, for modern science -- and therefore for all modern thought -- no non-arbitrary gods or moral-political authorities exist or can exist: god is dead! This declaration of independence from gods (moral-political authorities) made possible a scientific-experimentation and a humanist creativity liberated from any moral-political scruples. Seen in the atheist-nihilist light (or darkness), there is nothing inherently moral or immoral about anything including the experiments run by communists in the Gulag or by nazis in Auschwitz. The same holds for atomic desolation or the recent destruction of a Korean airliner by Russian fighters. Nietzsche and Dostoyevski drew the consequences of the liberation arising from modern liberalism and its liberal education: Nothing is unlawful: everything is permitted! When modern regimes -- whether democratic, communist or nazi try to use modern science for their own

ends, they never realize that they are introducing a Trojan Horse. Their overriding military need for scientific technology's products, especially nuclear weapons, obfuscates the mortal danger involved. So long as modern science is a military necessity, its subversion of politics is a clear, ever-present danger. By "subversion" here, I mean modern scientific-humanist rejection of any claim to non-arbitrary moral-political standards. An example close to home: President Reagan's unwillingness to overcome the liberal intellectuals opposing his original desire to dismantle NEH and NEA -- indeed his sympathy with them! He once saw the subversive character of such institutions, although he probably failed to see that this subversion springs from the core of all modern science or liberal education. In any case, modern liberal education's subversion poses a harsh, and probably insoluble, problem not only for President Reagan, but for all modern politics. That politics now depends upon the military hardware of a science bent upon liberating men from all moral-political restraints! In this crucial sense, military necessity is a strong, if unlikely, ally of the modern scientific-humanist threat to politics.

Since about 1980, I have been concentrating on the war between modern science and modern politics as outlined in the above reflections. Your research grant would help to continue a series of publications on the horror and emptiness of intellectual freedom, of serious efforts to liberate one's mind. There is no more important study for NEH, although, or because, the moral-political consequences revealed by these studies strongly support the President's original intention to eliminate institutions such as NEH or NEA.

In particular my research will deal with thinkers such as Rousseau, Dostoyevsky, Conrad, Wagner, Nietzsche, Kafka and Heidegger, men who realized the horrors encouraged by modern scientific-humanist liberation. I believe that my work reveals this horror more clearly and more openly than any other scholarship known to me. The usual, pseudo-academic approach praises the freedom of mind springing from liberal education without confronting freedom's terrifying moral- political price. As a popular song noted: freedom is just a word for nothing else to lose!

Chapter 35

Homage to Verdun

His form is ungainly -- his intellect small -- (So the Bellman would often remark) -- But his courage is perfect! And that after all, Is the thing that one needs with a snark.[1]

I once asked my brother what for him would be the most beautiful thing in life and he answered: "The most beautiful thing in life, that would be to croak as a twenty year old lieutenant in a trench before Paris."[2]

This Spring marks the sixty-sixth anniversary of the battle of Verdun. I should like to pay tribute to those who fought and died there. No battle equal in sustained ferocity and horror has been fought since. Approximately one million Prussian and French troops were killed or wounded in that ten month debacle. The battle need not have been fought, if the respective commanders had not subordinated over-all strategic considerations to their burning determination, the ancient resolve of the Gaul and the Teuton, to fight to the death. Had they not been relieved, commanders such as Knobelsdorf and Nivelle would have bled their armies white rather than yield an inch.

The Germans could have remained on the defensive in the West as they had since the Marne in 1914. Then they could have used their Verdun troops to attack in the East -- a strategy which, Churchill saw, probably would have defeated Russia in 1916. Germany could then have concentrated on the Western front and won there or, at least, have negotiated a peace which would have left vast Eastern gains. This prudent, Churchillian course was precluded by the French will to avenge

Appendix

"Goodbye to All That!"

[Introductory Note: Scripps college requires a self evaluation every ten years. This was my 1979 self evaluation. It marks the beginning of my turn from illiberal or philosophic (political) thought to liberal or scientific (apolitical) thought, from piety to *Götterdämmerung*. But that 1979 self evaluation, reproduced here almost without revision, signaled only the beginning of my Copernican Revolution, in its radicality similar to Strauss' Schmitt critique but in the opposite direction, that is, opposing the piety of both Strauss' political philosophy and Schmitt's political theology. Only a beginning, since it still shared something of Bloom's and Klein's need to camouflage liberal emptiness with the fig leaves of a socratic skepticism now unphilosophically elevated above illiberal (moral-political) concerns.

Destruction of that camouflage culminated in Liberalism's repudiation of illiberalism - and loathing for grovelling, cowardice, afraid to face the nihilism obfuscated by pseudo-liberal moralizing of liberalism. This unmanly flight from reality is responsible for contemporary "higher" education and the politics warped by it. My work, from the 1979 self evaluation to Liberalism, reflects a fight against that unmanliness, a farewell to pseudo-liberal caricatures of illiberalism.]

> *The language of [contemporary] political science claims to be ... entirely provisional; its terms are meant to imply hypotheses about political life. But this claim to undogmatic openness is a mere ceremonial gesture ... The most important example of its dogmatism is supplied by the treatment of religion in the new political or social science. The new science uses sociological or psychological theories regarding religion which exclude, without considering it, the possibility that religion rests ul-*

> *timately on God's revealing Himself to man; hence those theories are mere hypotheses which can never be confirmed. Those theories are in fact the hidden basis of the new science. The new science rests on a dogmatic atheism which presents itself as merely methodological or hypothetical.*
>
> *-- Strauss, Liberalism Ancient and Modern, New York, 1968, p. 218.*

Earlier this year I discussed the goal of my classes in "Why Education?" in the Motley Views series. I defended the proposition that it was impossible to teach anyone to think. It is possible to provide the conditions for thought for those with a need to think. The need to think arises when one's world crumbles, when what previously seemed most worthwhile becomes deeply problematic. This may occur in many ways -- a crisis of religious, moral or political faith; dissolution of one's family or of a close friendship or sheer boredom. When it occurs, for whatever reason, one finds oneself in a position akin to that of Aeneas at the fall of Troy.

In the Aeneid (II), Aeneas recounts his despair when confronted with the collapse of his world, his family and city and the gods sanctifying them. He exhorts his men to make a suicidal charge against their victorious foe. Since men without family and civic gods are dead already, they might as well go down fighting. Like most men in that sort of abyss, Aeneas rescues himself by securing new gods or moral authorities. The situation does not lead him to think, although only situations of that kind provide man with the need to seriously question the morality previously regnant in their souls. Instead most do what Aeneas did or they suffer a "break-down" or, in anguish, they kill themselves. However, destruction of what they most cherished can spark a search for what, if anything, truly is worth cherishing. When that happens, men experience the need to think. The main job of genuine schools is providing them with the leisure, the conditions, for thinking (the word "school" comes from the Greek word for leisure). It is not to teach them to think. Schools cannot awaken even the need to think, much less thought itself.

One's need to think usually is obfuscated by an even stronger need to do what Aeneas did, to embrace some substitute for the now discredited morality. Even should this obfuscation not occur, the need to think obviously is not thinking. How is that need transformed into actual thinking? This transformation seems to me fantastically difficult, if not

impossible. Nothing makes this difficulty clearer than Socrates' efforts to question his Athenian family and civic piety.

To put it starkly, that piety forbade what we call thought, condemning it as criminal or, at best, thoughtless. It limited the pious Athenian's horizon to his sacred family and city and to the gods sanctifying them. Any need to consider what is human or cosmopolitan appeared irrational on this tribal or civic horizon.

In my freshman year at college a teacher brought the problem home to me through the following example. He claimed that a certain tribe could count five of their canoes and seven enemy canoes, but they could not add them to make twelve. That would be like adding five stars and seven ants to make twelve star-ants. Only commensurable things may be added. Of course any of us could "teach" that tribe that each of the twelve canoes is one. But, to make a pun, they would deny that this counts. What counts is that these five canoes are part of their sacred tribe protected by its gods.

In Thucydides (I) a Spartan king, Archidamus, agrees that by nature all men are equal. But he insists that as mere human beings they are little better than lazy beasts. What makes them something which counts, according to Archidamus, is twenty-three years (from 7-30) of Spartan higher education, that is, twenty- three years of the harshest military training. Graduates of that education emerged as pious Spartan warriors, something infinitely more precious to Archidamus, than merely being human. Since Archidamus' martial piety informed pre-philosophic or pre-Christian communities, they usually killed or enslaved defeated enemies. Defeat, for them, proved the impotence or non-existence of their gods. Without the protection of their gods men were despised as worthless, slaves, mere human beings. The defeated Aeneas' horror at this degradation sparked his attempt at a last, suicidal charge against the conquerors of his Troy.

Socratic questioning emerged out of and against an Athenian piety which defined Athenian thinking as narrowly as Trojan piety defined Aeneas' or Spartan piety, Archidamus'. So far as I know, no man before or since found himself in similar straits. Before he began questioning Athenian piety, it dominated his life which, consequently, had been primarily Athenian and not human. At some point Socrates experienced the need seriously to question that piety. The rest of his life -- and, I believe, all subsequent efforts at thinking -- was the ultimately unsuccessful effort to justify that need. Its lack of success is apparent in the dying Socrates' confession that he knew nothing of any importance.

In terms of Genesis (3), Socrates was not among those disciples of the Serpent who have become like gods, knowing good and evil. Consequently he admittedly lacked the knowledge to justify his life-long questioning of Athenian piety. Awareness of this lack informed his thought as it never again informed anyone else's. This awareness seems to me to define thought by defining its limits. Without this awareness, thought degenerates into propaganda, however scientifically or humanistically that propaganda presents itself. Insofar as my teaching or my life has a serious goal, it is the enormously difficult, perhaps impossible, job of keeping alive this awareness in myself, my students and my colleagues.

Why is the job hard, if not impossible? Is it not easy for anyone today to doubt that now apparently discredited Athenian piety? Recently some teachers (in Georgia I believe) objected to laws obliging them to teach traditional Biblical creation doctrine along with Darwinian evolution theory. They regarded the evolution hypothesis as scientific and therefore true, while despising orthodox creation doctrine as an unfortunate relic of medieval superstition. Yet it seems to me obvious that this doctrine has not, and perhaps cannot, be refuted -- except by ridicule and that hardly constitutes refutation! The efforts at refutation from Galileo and Spinoza to Darwin, Marx and Nietzsche bear witness to this inability. How can anyone prove that an omnipotent god, one who can therefore work miracles incomprehensible to human reason, could not have created the world *ex nihilo* in six days some six thousand years ago?

The proof must succeed in doing what a Spinoza or a Nietzsche intended to do: it must show that the universe is of such a nature that the omnipotent creator of orthodox Biblical theology could not exist. In other words, one must have a definitive knowledge of man and the universe! Although that knowledge may be available -- I am tempted to say that god only knows if it is -- it seems to me unlikely, if not impossible. Consequently the old conflict between reason and revelation still seems to me as unresolved, and perhaps as unresolvable, as it ever was. For it involves nothing less than two radically opposed notions of what it means to exist and to be reasonable or true. To call one of them bigoted and irrational is to claim far more knowledge than seems to me available. It is to be a propagandist rather than a thinker.

Propaganda is the secular effort to discredit biblical faith without showing the non-existence of the omnipotent god presupposed by that faith. The question of right probably is unanswerable in conflicts such as those between Galileo and the Church, Spinoza and the Synagogue,

Darwin and Christian orthodoxy, or Judge McGeehan's 1940 attack on Bertrand Russell in the name of traditional faith and morals. The fact that a cause is championed by an A.C.L.U. or that it agrees with the humanist or scientific propaganda dominating most schools does not make it right or true. I try to prevent myself, my students and my colleagues from succumbing to this propaganda.

However necessary it is, the realization that modern humanist and scientific propaganda is not obviously true is at most preliminary to education's main goal. For the religious orthodoxy against which modern humanists and scientists assert their intellectual freedom does not threaten thought so radically as does the Athenian piety with which Socrates contended. Whatever their differences, Galileo and the Inquisition, Darwin and Bishop Wilberforce, Judge McGeehan and Russell agreed that genuine thought and morality means concern with all mankind, not just with one's own tribe or city. The first words of the Bible are about a god who creates the whole world (heaven and earth) and man in it.

This global or cosmopolitan concern is common to the Bible and its scientific "debunkers." The two camps also share the conviction that their faith (Bible) or hypotheses (science) are not self-evident knowledge. The difference is that the traditional Biblical faiths do not, as science must, admit that they always may be radically revised in the light of new experiments: god is believed to have spoken once and for all to Moses or Jesus or Mohammed. Incidentally this means that no genuine scientist will regard any theory -- including Darwin's or Einstein's -- as more than provisional, hypothetical.

The ground common to modern scientific or humanist thought and orthodox Biblical faith was denied by the Athenian piety from which Socrates tried unsuccessfully to liberate his mind. The Athenians regarded their religion not as a faith to be believed, but as self-evident knowledge of the highest sort. Socrates spent his life unsuccessfully trying to show that this piety was not self-evident wisdom but an opinion which, as such, was subject to legitimate questioning of its truth and value. Socrates would not have had to do this with Biblical faith which admits that genuine knowledge of god is available only in the next life. At the end of his life, Socrates admitted his inability to reduce Athenian piety to a faith or belief of this sort. Consequently he was compelled to acknowledge that Athenian piety perhaps rightly condemned attempts at this reduction as immoral.

Socrates' knowledge of his ignorance prevented him from proving to himself the superiority of being human over the familial and patriotic

concerns of pious Athenians. Those who considered themselves able to demonstrate that superiority were called sophists by Socrates. Sophist means wise man or knower, a scientist in the original meaning of *scientia*. Sophists or scientists in this crucial sense are knowledgeable about the very basis of morality. They know -- or believe that they know -- that the nature of man and the universe precludes the existence of tribal and civic gods. In short, they are as gods knowing good and evil.

Socrates believed that men without deluding themselves can be philosophers, but not scientists (sophists). Philosophers seek the knowledge which scientists (sophists) claim to have, the knowledge permitting them to despise Athenian piety as superstition. Philosophy's awareness of its ignorance makes it hard, if not impossible, to reduce that piety to a belief much less to despise it as superstition or prejudice! Paradoxically it was the power of that piety in Socrates' soul which made him a philosopher as distinct from a scientist (sophist). Science (sophistry) may exist anywhere, while philosophy is at home only in an Athens in which a Socrates, prior to philosophizing, has been moved by a radically anti-human, anti-philosophic piety. The pious, pre-philosophic enslavement to this piety compelled him to take it seriously when the need to question it arose. Preventing him from believing that he knew more than he did, this enslavement (plus his intellectual honesty) made him a philosopher rather than a scientist (sophist).

In regimes informed by biblical or cosmopolitan morality, the pious prerequisite for philosophy is absent. In those regimes it is practically impossible to take seriously, as Socrates took seriously, the claims of the piety responsible for his death. In such regimes, one's only access to philosophy is not first-hand experience but historical studies revolving around the conflict between Socrates and his Athenian piety. For better or worse, philosophy as distinct from science (sophistry) is a rare plant not at home everywhere. Nothing is more symptomatic of its absence than its current use in such expressions as "My philosophy about that matter is -- " Here it usually means one's ultimate faith or conviction about the subject at hand, a kind of (secular) religious faith or (unscientific) hypothesis about that subject. What could be further from Socrates' efforts to question a piety hostile to religion as a faith and to science as hypothetical?

Believing as I do that philosophy is man's most important job, I know of nothing more crucial to liberal education than serious reflection on those ancient texts which clarify the Socratic problem -- Aristophanes' Clouds, Plato's Dialogues and Xenophon's Socratic works and

secondarily those works in which Socrates discerned strong opposition to philosophy -- Homer, the tragedians, Aristophanes' comedies, the sophists and rhetoricians. That is why the ancient Greek required readings in our humanities are at the heart of Scripps and of any serious school. That is also why our ancient world faculty seminar seems to me far more important than all committees and other administrative work.

Earlier I described as propagandists those modern scientists (humanists) confident in their right to despise traditional biblical orthodoxy. This orthodoxy obviously is far easier to question than Socrates' Athenian piety which denied the value of being human, whether in a christian or scientific (humanist) sense. The heart of science (sophistry) is not so much contempt for fundamentalist biblical claims. Rather it is the contempt, shared by almost everyone since Socrates, for his Athenian piety. The rejection of philosophy implied in this contempt informs all efforts to be scientific (sophistic), to rely on human reason to solve human problems.

At the beginning of Oedipus the Tyrant, Oedipus believes that his own wits, unassisted by the city's gods, can solve all his personal and political problems. In the end he acknowledges the emptiness of this belief. In my humanities class we argue quite a bit about whether Oedipus' earlier belief in his intellectual freedom was wiser than his final acknowledgment of enslavement to his gods. This question informs what I call thought or philosophy.

My favorite curriculum would spend the freshman year concentrating on the unsuccessful efforts of the main modern thinkers (e.g., Galileo, Spinoza, Locke, Kant, Hegel, Darwin) to liberate their minds from Biblical orthodoxy. This would be only a basic training preliminary to education's serious job, reflection for the rest of the student's life on those ancient texts required to come to grips with the Socratic problem. My main goal is to enable myself, my students and my colleagues to do just that.

I see no difference between this goal and my service to the college. In the last decade, I have opposed various forms of what seemed to me propaganda. I refer to my opposition to humanitarian causes such as Black Liberation, Women's Liberation, opposition to the Vietnam war. Champions of those causes may be right for all I know. But they would have to show me that they possess the knowledge lacked by Socrates, the knowledge that their humanitarian or cosmopolitan concern -- or any such concern -- does not arise from blindness to their own ignorance.

A while back, I brought Phyllis Schlafly, an opponent of women's liberation and ERA to speak at Scripps. I did this not because I thought her right, but because Scripps, like most schools, had invited only speakers opposed to her views. The opposition to those speakers needed a hearing at Scripps. Another and, to me, more important reason only became clear as I listened to the heated arguments inspired by Schlafly's presence. Not only is the cause championed by her anathema to most contemporary intellectuals: it is, at bottom, despised by propagandists, that is, by all who believe that philosophy, Socratic questioning, can be transformed into science (sophistry).

Schlafly clearly places familial and patriotic concerns over human ones. Her religion's (Christianity) cosmopolitanism prevented her from adequately defending those concerns. The strong familial and civic passions which inspire her cannot be successfully defended in regimes whose morality is grounded in universal, humanitarian propositions such as the equality of all men. When she defended participation in the Vietnam war as a patriotic duty, a student asked whether god was more concerned about Americans than about Vietnamese. The inadequacy of her answer reflected the general inability to cherish as primary home and country after the disestablishment of the kind of piety which killed Socrates.

Since Socrates, a remarkable reversal has occurred. The piety responsible for his death has itself become outlawed and despised. In Socrates' Athens, the goals of the passions dominant in a Schlafly were officially sanctified, while the cosmopolitan goals of a Socrates were officially condemned. This amazing reversal occurred because Socrates was unable to persuade scientists or sophists, beginning with Plato, that the patriotic goals of a Schlafly were perhaps more just and truer than the cosmopolitanism sparking his need to question those goals. From Plato and Aristotle to Marx and Nietzsche, scientists (sophists) have advocated as self-evident the primacy of the human (or super-human) over the tribal or patriotic.

After Socrates, there was a progressive (or regressive?) obfuscation of philosophy in favor of science (sophistry). The main readings of our humanities reflect this progress or regress. The most philosophic readings are the ancient greek ones; the least philosophic are contemporary works with the medieval ones in the middle. My best service to myself and Scripps College is my defense of reflection on those ancient readings as the heart of our school.

Earlier I said that it was not possible to teach people to think. It is possible to show the most seductive obstacles to thought. These are not

so-called racist, sexist or religious bigotry. On the contrary, the real obstacle is the smug, self-satisfied humanist or scientific propaganda whose blindness to its own ignorance encourages contempt for the passions moving a Schlafly. I try to make myself, my students and my colleagues aware of that ignorance.

Notes

Notes to the Introduction

1. See Maurice Stans, The Terrors of Justice: The Untold Side of Watergate [New York, 1978] especially pp. 23-79. Solzhenitsyn has shown down to the last detail why the political use of criminal justice must be tyrannical.

2. Claremont Review of Books, Spring, 1988.

3. J. Fest, Hitler, Interpolation III.

4. Jaffa, Letter to Professor S. B. Drury, Political Theory, 15 (August, 1987) p. 324.

5. Chaninah Maschler, "Lessing's Ernst and Falk, Dialogues for Freemasons," Interpretation, 14 (January, 1986) p. 2, note 4.

6. Strauss, Spinoza's Critique of Religion, pp. 348, 31.

7. A. Bloom, Closing of the American Mind, (New York, 1987) p. 276.

8. Plato, Republic, 439E-441C.

9. Ibid., 505A-511D.

10. Plato, Protagoras 337C-D.

11. Plato, Republic, 328C-329D.

12. Jaffa, note to Professor George Benson on "The Ethics of Ethics Programs," (December 7, 1988).

13. Strauss, Natural Right and History (Chicago, 1953) p. 66.

14. Nietzsche, Will to Power, 910.

15. Jean Dutuard, The Taxis of the Marne, (New York, 1957) p. 54.

16. Ibid., pp. 173-178.

17. below, end of chapter.

18. Heidegger, "Who is Nietzsche's Zarathustra?"

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1. Strauss, What is Political Philosophy (Glencoe, 1959) 178.

2. Nietzsche, Zarathustra, II:7,20; Will to Power, 765.

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3. W. Allen (editor), The Infancy of Nazism: The Memoirs of Ex-Gauleiter Albert Krebs (New York: Franklin Watts, 1976) pp.206ff.

4. K. Löwith, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1960) pp. 122-123.

5. H. Jaffa, "The Legacy of Leo Strauss," The Claremont Review of Books (Fall, 1984) pp. 14-21; "The Legacy of Leo Strauss Defended," The Claremont Review of Books (Spring, 1985) pp. 20- 24.

6. H. Rauschnigg, The Voice of Destruction (New York: Putnam's, 1940) pp. 226-227.

7. Heidegger, An Introduction to Metaphysics (Doubleday-Anchor Paperback, 1961) p. 166.

8. Heidegger, "*Nur noch ein Gott kann uns Retten*!" ("Only a God Can Save Us Now!"), *Der Spiegel* (May 31, 1976) pp. 193, 209.

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1. Above, Chapter 1.
2. E. Spears, Assignment to Catastrophe, Vol. II, (New York, 1945) p. 238.
3. Strauss, Natural Right and History, (Chicago, 1953) p. 26.
4. W. Churchill, Their Finest Hour, (New York, 1988) p. 50.
5. W. Churchill, The Gathering Storm, (New York, 1948) p. 321.

Notes to Chapter Four

1. C. Wilson, "A Comment on Alexandre Kojeve's The Christian Origin of Modern Science," The St. Johns Review (Winter, 1984) p. 26.

2. Rousseau, The Social Contract, II:7 ("The Legislator").

3. Dostoevsky, "Ivan the Tsarevitch," The Possessed (Part II, Chapter 8), translated by C. Garnett.

4. Kant, "Concerning an Event of Our Time which Demonstrates the Moral Tendency of the Human Race," An Old Question Raised Again: Is the Human Race Constantly Progressing?, 6.

5. Dostoevsky, "Night," The Possessed (Part II, Chapter 2); Nietzsche, Zarathustra, IV:9 ("The Shadow").

6. Nietzsche, Kritische Gesamtausgabe, edited by M. Montinari and G. Colli (Berlin, 1967) VII_1, p. 133; Will to Power, 910.

7. R. Bultmann, Jesus Christ and Mythology, Chapter 5, section 9.

8. Dostoevsky, "Conclusion," The Possessed (Part III, Chapter 8).

9. Nietzsche, Letter to Jacob Burckhardt (January 6, 1889); Zarathustra, III:4 ("Before Sunrise").

10. Dostoevsky, "The Subtle Serpent," The Possessed (Part I, Chapter 5).

11. Milton, Paradise Lost, I:63, 105-109; Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols, IX, 32; Melville, Moby Dick, chapter 41; Strauss, The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism (Chicago, 1989) p. 166.

12. Goethe, Faust, I ("Night"), 588-593; II ("Laboratory") 6820-7004; L. Strauss, Thoughts on Machiavelli (Glencoe, 1958) p. 174; Nietzsche, Zarathustra, II:21 ("Human Prudence"), Beyond Good and Evil, 87.

13. Mann, Tristan, 10.

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1. Gottfried Benn, "Berlin Letter" (July, 1948).

2. Nietzsche, Joyful Science, 114-117, 354.

3. Heidegger, *Martin Heidegger zum 80. Geburtstag von seiner Heimatstadt Messkirch* (Frankfurt A/M, 1969) pp. 36-45, 16- 30, 7-10; "*Warum Bleiben Wir in der Provinz*?" in G. Schneeburger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger* (Bern, 1962) pp. 216- 218.

4. Nietzsche, Joyful Science, 114; Will to Power, 481; Beyond Good and Evil, 6, 211.

5. Nietzsche, Joyful Science, 110; *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, edited by Colli and Montinari (Berlin, 1967 ff.) VII_2, p. 84; Zarathustra, I:17; IV:9; Beyond Good and Evil, 41; Will to Power, 910.

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13. Husserl (above, note 12) p. 169.

14. Husserl, "Philosophy as a Rigorous Science" (above, note 12), p. 71; Strauss, Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy (Chicago, 1983) pp. 34-37; The City and Man (above, note 11) pp. 1-4.

15. Strauss, Liberalism Ancient and Modern (New York, 1968) p. 230.

16. Strauss, Liberalism Ancient and Modern (above, note 15) pp. 242-248; Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy (above, note 14) pp. 167, 235, 244.

17. Strauss, Liberalism Ancient and Modern (above, note 15) pp. 256, 152, 155-156, 169-172, 178-184; Philosophie und Gesetz (Berlin, 1935) p. 20; "A Giving of Accounts" The College (St. Johns College, April, 1970) p. 3.

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19. Strauss, The City and Man (above, note 10) pp. 21, 33-34, 49; Liberalism Ancient and Modern (above, note 15) p. 201; The Political Philosophy of Hobbes (Chicago, 1952) pp. 90, 147-148, 81, xix; Philosophie und Gesetz (above, note 17) pp. 67- 71, 121-122; Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy (above, note 14) p. 165; S. Schaub, "The Religion of Rootlessness" (above, note 10) p. 389.

20. Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (Tubingen, 1966) p. 152; Nietzsche, II (Pfullingen, 1961) p. 198; Löwith, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen* (above, note 8) pp. 122-123.

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22. J. Chapin, "What is History's Ground?" Claremont Review of Books (Winter, 1985) p. 16; Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (above, note 20) pp. 28-29; Nietzsche, I (above, note 9) p. 629; Nietzsche, II (above, note 20) p. 198; Strauss, Liberalism Ancient and Modern (above, note 16) p. 215.

23. Benn, Letter to Erich Pfeiffer-Belli (1936).

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2. Liberalism Ancient and Modern, pp. 76-139; Natural Right and History, pp. 112-113.

3. "Relativism" in H. Schoeck and J.W. Wiggins (eds.), Relativism and the Study of Man, p. 153ff; Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy, p. 177ff.

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5. Strauss, The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism (Chicago, 1989) p. 168.

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3. Ibid., pp. 45-46, 106, 133, 137, 145.
4 Ibid., pp. 33, 95.
5. Ibid., pp. 38-41, 104 171; Strauss, Thoughts on Machiavelli. (Glencoe, 1958) p. 167.
6. Argument, pp. 15-20, 49, 142-146; cf. Strauss, On Tyranny. (Ithaca, 1958) p. 194.
7. Argument, pp. 56-57, 72, 155; Plato, Laws, 711A-B, 712C.
8. Argument, pp. 3-5; cf. On Tyranny, p. 129, note 50.
9. Argument, pp. 55; Plato, Republic, 327A-C.
10. Argument, p. 44: Strauss, The City and Man, (Chicago, 1963) pp. 150, 176-182, 207-209, 216-217.
11. Argument, pp. 20, 141-50, 172, 183-4; Strauss, What is Political Philosophy? (Glencoe, 1959) p.299.
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13. Strauss, Spinoza's Critique of Religion, (New York, 1965) pp. 332-33.
14. S. Rosen, Hermeneutics as Politics (New York, 1987) pp. 17, 110-11, 122, 126, 133, 137, 140, 180.
15. Ibid., 133.
16. On Schmitt's Christian piety, see H. Meier, *Carl Schmitt, Leo Strauss und Der Begriff des Politischen* (Stuttgart, 1988).
17. Strauss, Natural Right and History (Chicago, 1953) p. 10, note 3.
18. Meier, ibid., pp. 89-92.
19. Ibid., p. 62.
20. Above, Chapter 8 (#10); Meier, ibid., p. 50.

21. Strauss, The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism (Chicago, 1989) pp. 212-226; A. Kojeve, "The Christian Origin of Modern Science," The St. Johns Review (Winter, 1984) pp. 22-26; Meier, ibid., p.90 (note 101) and p.94 (note 110); C. Schmitt, Political Romanticism (Cambridge, 1986) p. 132: "In the course of a millenium of intellectual work in the Catholic Church and its theology, all human problems were discussed in the highest form they can have: namely theologically."

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2. Plato, Protagoras 337C-D.

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2. Ibid., lecture 2.

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3. Spinoza Ethics, I (appendix); Nietzsche, Will to Power, 556, 481, 466; Joyful Science, 114.
4. Nietzsche, *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, edited by G. Colli and M. Montinari (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1967 ff.) VII_1, p. 133; Beyond Good and Evil, 41, 230; Will to Power, 910.
5. Nietzsche, Letter to F. Overbeck (July 2, 1885); Zarathustra, IV:9, 13 (#13), 16; Will to Power, 598, 822, 910; Beyond Good and Evil, 29, 269.
6. L. Strauss, *Philosophie und Gesetz*, Berlin: Shocken, 1935) p. 20; cf. pp. 26-27, note 1.
7. Beckmann, *Tagebücher: 1940-1950* (Munich: Langen, 1955) p. 73 (March 19, 1944).
8. Beckmann (above, note 7) p. 328 (July 10, 1949).
9. Heidegger, Being and Time, 51-53; Nietzsche, Joyful Science, 278.
10. Nietzsche, Birth of Tragedy, 7; *Ecce Homo*, "Why I am so Shrewd," 4; Will to Power, 598.
11. L. Strauss, Liberalism Ancient and Modern (New York: Basic Books, 1968) pp. 223, 210-219.
12. "Transcript of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R. for the evening session of March 12, 1938" in Europe in Review (Chicago: Rand McNally, Revised edition, 1964) edited by Mosse, Cameron, Hill and Petrovich, pp. 535-436, Cf. A. Koestler, Darkness at Noon (New York: Macmillan, 1941) p. 251: "If I ask myself today, 'For what am I dying?' I am confronted by absolute nothingness. There is nothing for which one could die, if one died without having repented and

unreconciled with the party and the Movement. Therefore, on the threshold of my last hour, I bend my knees to the country, to the masses and to the whole people."

13. Carl Schmitt, The Concept of the Political (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1976) pp. 53-54, 98-101; *Politische Romantik* (Berlin: Dunker und Humblot, Third Edition, 1968) pp. 177-178, 222; Nietzsche, Joyful Science, 1, 300-301, 344, 382; Zarathustra, Prologue: 5 ("The Last Men").

14. Consider H. Gadamer's inability to grasp that his "relativism" shares the nihilism sparking Heidegger's horror at the "world night" or the "*Untergang des Abendlands*" arising from "the radicalization and universalization of hermeneutics ... the hermeneutic situation *par excellence*" in "Correspondence Concerning Truth and Method: Leo Strauss and Hans-Georg Gadamer." Independent Journal of Philosophy (Vol. 2, 1978) pp. 5-11. That radical- ization reduces truth to method, to methods of experiencing, points of view, reveries. Strauss rightly points to the connection between Gadamer's blindness to this reduction's horror and his "translation of Heidegger's questions, analyses and hints into a more academic medium. There is a chapter on Dilthey and none on Nietzsche" (ibid, pp. 5, 8).

15. Schmitt, *Politische Theologie* (Munich: Dunker and Humblot, Second Edition, 1934) pp. 75-83.

16. Thomas B. Hess "The Germans are Here! The Germans are Here!", New York (May 5, 1975) pp. 98-99: "The images spell out the archetypal horrors lurking behind the massive forehead and bulldog glare with which Beckmann fortified his ego in a long series of self-portraits ... He had enough love-hate to go around. George Grosz, on the other hand, operated well beyond the pleasure principle. He had mostly hate – in superabundance ... in a series of anguished black ink drawings and frothily colored melodramas that are tightened to a terrible pitch of fury ... It reminds you of the 'Morgue' poems by Gottfried Benn, Grosz's contemporary and compatriot, who sang of 'The mouth of a girl who had vacationed a long time in a swamp seemed gnawed. / When they opened her chest, the esophagus was riddled. / Finally in a tunnel under the diaphragm, they found a nest of young rats ... ' Grosz's and Beckmann's contempt is all-embracing. There is a bullying streak, an edge of hard cynicism in these fervent anti-nazis that takes them perilously close to the Brownshirts' credo ... Goering couldn't have put it better. And no one more shared Beckmann's and Grosz's disdain for the bourgeois with his pudgy fingers, for the beggar with his broken teeth, for the tycoon with his syphilitic mistress than Dr. Goebbels." Cf. H. Neumann, "The Price of Freedom: A Note on George Grosz and Edward Hopper," Newsletter of the Graphic Arts Council of the Los Angeles Museum of Art, Vol. 12, #2 91977) pp. 1-7.

17. Beckmann (above, note 8) p. 104 (April 13, 1945). Bukharin (above, note 12, "Transcript of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R.", p. 435) makes the same link apparent from the point of view of communist-nazi suppressors of art which reveals the fear of nihilism responsible for the suppression.

He notes that liberal intellectuals do not grasp why he is divided against himself. In reality the division is between elements in him still clinging to ancient-medieval "science's" illusions and his nihilist realization that only his self-created faith in leader and party saves him from the "absolutely black vacuity" revealed by genuine science: "When some West European and American intellectuals begin to entertain doubts and vacillations in connection with the trials taking place in the U.S.S.R., this is primarily due to the fact that these people do not understand the radical distinction, namely, that in our country the enemy has at the same time a divided, a dual mind. And I think this is the first thing to be understood ... Repentance is often attributed to diverse and absolutely absurd things ... This [the reason for the confession cited above, note 12] will serve to refute by facts all fables and absurd counter-revolutionary tales."

As the nihilist counterpart of ancient-medieval "science's" primary opposition (reason and revelation, above note 6), Bukharin's divided self, his conflict of nihilism and nihilist politics, springs from the impossible (and therefore fanatic) effort to be serious or political, that is, to cling to the illusions of ancient-medieval "science," in the reality uncovered by genuine science (Nietzsche, Joyful Science, 1, 125, 344; Zarathustra, IV:9, 16).

Notes to Chapter Sixteen

1. W. Churchill, Blood, Sweat and Tears (New York: Putnam's, 1941) p. 314.
2. H. Rauschnigg, The Voice of Destruction (New York: Putnam's, 1940) p. 227.
3. W. Heisenberg, *Das Naturbild der Heutigen Physik*, Rowohlts Deutsche Enzyklopädie (Hamburg, 1955) pp. 44-45.
4. Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1953) p. 152.
5. Spinoza, Theological-Political Treatise, Preface.
6. Nietzsche, Joyful Science, 110, 51, 319, 324, 374.
7. Nietzsche, *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, edited by G. Colli and M. Montinari (Berlin, 1967 ff.) VII_2, p. 84.
8. W. F. Buckley, Jr. Odyssey of a Friend. (New York, 1969) p. 163.
9. K. Löwith, "*Der Okkasionelle Dezisionismus von C. Schmitt*," *Gesammalte Abhandlungen* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1960) pp. 122- 123.
10. C. Schmitt, *Politische Romantik* (Berlin: Dunker und Humblot, Third Edition, 1968) pp. 177-178, 222.
11. Nietzsche, "On the Tarantulas" and "On Redemption," Thus Spoke Zarathustra, II:7, 20; Will to Power, 765.
12. Neumann, "The Price of Freedom: A Note on George Grosz and Edward Hopper," Newsletter of the Graphic Arts Council of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Vol. 12, #2 (1977) pp. 1-7.

13. Nietzsche, *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, edited by G. Colli and M. Montinari (Berlin, 1967 ff.) III_3, p. 172.

14. Nietzsche, "On the Thousand and One Goals," Thus Spoke Zarathustra, I:15.

Notes to Chapter Seventeen

1. Thomas Mann, Doktor Faustus (Berlin, 1947) chapter 27. Cf. *Martin Heidegger zum 80. Geburtstag von Seiner Heimatstadt Messkirch* (Frankfurt am Main, 1969).

2. Joyful Science, 110, 51, 319, 324, 374; Zarathustra, I:7, IV:4, 15; *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, edited by G. Colli and M. Montinari (Berlin, 1967ff.) VII_2, p. 84: "We are making an experiment with the truth. Perhaps mankind will be destroyed by it! Fine!"

3. Letter to F. Overbeck (July 2, 1885); Zarathustra, IV:9, 13 (#13), 16; Will to Power, 598, 822, 910; Beyond Good and Evil, 29, 269.

4. Beyond Good and Evil, Preface; Heidegger, "*Nietzsches Wort Gott ist Tot*," Holzwege, (Frankfurt am Main, 1950) pp. 193-247.

5. Joyful Science, 125; Genealogy of Morals, III, 24-25.

6. Joyful Science, 57-59, 116, 299-301, 354; Beyond Good and Evil, 188, 199-203, Will to Power, 481, 556.

7. Zarathustra, II:8, 17.

8. Beyond Good and Evil, 6; Joyful Science, 344; Zarathustra, IV:4, 15-18.

9. Will to Power, 507, 515-516; Heidegger, Nietzsche, I (Pfullingen, 1961) pp. 508-616.

10. Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung der Deutschen Universität* (Breslau, 1933) pp. 12-13: "If what the passionate, god-seeking last German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, said: 'god is dead' is true ... how then do things stand with science?. . .Then questioning no longer is only the transcendable prelude to an answer or to knowing, but, on the contrary, questioning itself becomes the highest form of knowing." Zarathustra, II:2.

11. Joyful Science, 57-58, 112-114; Will to Power, 481; Zarathustra, II:15-17; Beyond Good and Evil, 16-22.

12. Will to Power, 635-636, 682; Beyond Good and Evil, 12, 16-17, 23; Zarathustra, II:9; *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, VII_1, p. 426.

13. Zarathustra, I:6 (Pale Criminal); IV:7 (Ugliest Man).

14. Beyond Good and Evil, 150; Heidegger, Nietzsche, I, pp. 255- 472.

15. Zarathustra, IV:16; Heidegger, *Was Heisst Denken*? (Tübingen, 1961) pp. 11-47; Thomas Mann, *Doktor Faustus*, chapters 15, 25: "Why must all things appear to me as parodies of themselves? ... One could spice up the game by playing with

empty forms from which one knows all life has gone ... This parody could be fun, if it were not so melancholy in its aristocratic nihilism." See also chapter 39 and Epilogue (end). Cf. Zarathustra, IV:5, 14- 15; Joyful Science, 356-361; Beyond Good and Evil, 222-224.

16. Heidegger, *Was Heisst Denken*?, p. 15: "'The world is my representation (*Vorstellung*).' In this sentence Schopenhauer has summarized the thought of modern philosophy. His main work, The World as Will and Representation, has, since its appearance in 1818, most persistently defined all thought of the whole nineteenth and twentieth centuries ... Even Nietzsche ... in spite of his opposed conception of the will, held fast to Schopenhauer's fundamental axiom: 'The world is my representation.' Schopenhauer himself says the following about this axiom at the beginning of the second volume (chapter 1) of his main work: 'The world is my representation' is, like the axioms of Euclid, a proposition which everyone who understands must recognize as true.'" Cf. Heidegger, Nietzsche, II, pp. 148-200, 229-240, 291-314.

17. Joyful Science, 108-109, 124-125, 344, 377; Twilight of the Idols, IX:5.

18. Zarathustra, IV:18; Beyond Good and Evil, 55-56, 8, 231, 249; Heidegger, Nietzsche, II, p. 65.

19. Zarathustra, I:6.

20. Zarathustra, II:6-7; Genealogy of Morals, III, 24; Twilight of the Idols, IX:5; Beyond Good and Evil, 62, 202-204, 212-213, 225.

21. D.H. Lawrence, review of Hemingway's In Our Time in The Portable D.H. Lawrence (New York, 1947) p. 645: "He doesn't want to love anybody; he doesn't want to go anywhere, he doesn't want to do anything. He just wants to lounge around and maintain a healthy state of nothingness inside himself and an attitude of negation to everything outside himself." Cf. Heidegger, Nietzsche, I, pp. 102-105.

22. L. Strauss, The City and Man (Chicago, 1964) p. 241: " ... the all important question which is coeval with philosophy although the philosophers do not frequently pronounce it — the question *quid sit deus*." Consider Joyful Science, 1, 110, 344, 359; Zarathustra, II:8.

23. *Ecce Homo*, Preface, 3; Beyond Good and Evil, 207.

24. *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, III_3, p. 172; Zarathustra, Prologue, 5; II:8, 14, 16; IV:15; Beyond Good and Evil, 203-213, 263-264; Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (Tübingen, 1953) pp. 28- 29, 34-35, 152; Nietzsche, I, pp. 267-278, 475-481, 501-504, 530-533.

25. *Ecce Homo*, Preface, 3; II:4; Will to Power, 598; Zarathustra, II:13; IV:4, 7, 15; Genealogy of Morals, I:1; Joyful Science, 51, 324, 374; Heidegger, Nietzsche, I, pp. 271-275, 290-291.

26. Plato, *Phaedo*, 96A-100E; L. Strauss, The Political Philosophy of Hobbes (Chicago, 1952) pp. 141-145; T. West, Plato's Apology of Socrates (Ithaca, 1979) pp. 89-90, 93; H. Gildin, Political Philosophy (New York, 1975) pp. vii-xvi, 60-61, 109-124.

44. Beyond Good and Evil, 208-213; Heidegger, *Was Heisst Denken*?, pp. 65-67.

45. Zarathustra, I:15.

46. Antichrist, 57-58; Beyond Good and Evil, 188, 203-213, 257; Joyful Science, 356; Twilight of the Idols, IX:39-41; Will to Power, 125-128, 133, 237, 464, 729, 734, 749, 759, 862, 866, 964-1002; Zarathustra, III:12 (#29).

47. Beyond Good and Evil, 225; Joyful Science, 373; Will to Power, 1054. Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, pp. 28-29.

48. Beyond Good and Evil, 240-257, 203; *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, $VIII_1$, pp. 69-72; Joyful Science, 362.

49. Zarathustra, Prologue, 5; IV:12 (#1-3); Heidegger, *Was Heisst Denken*?, pp. 29-33, 69-70.

50. Zarathustra, III:12 (#11), IV:3, 8; Will to Power, 954-960, 978; Beyond Good and Evil, 201-203, 257.

51. Zarathustra, II:20.

52. Zarathustra, II:20; Twilight of the Idols, X:4-5; *Ecce Homo*, II:10 (end); Will to Power, 1041, 1050-1052; Beyond Good and Evil, 55-56.

53. Zarathustra, III:13, II;4 (end), 6-7; III:2; IV:7; *Ecce Homo*, IV:6; Genealogy of Morals, I:12; III:14; Heidegger, Nietzsche, I, pp. 291-317, 438-447.

54. *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, VII_1, p. 139; Zarathustra, II:22.

55. G. Lukács, "*Nietzsche als Begründer des Irrationalismus der imperialistischen Periode*," *Die Zerstörung der Vernunft* (Berlin, 1954) pp. 244-317. As a marxist, Lukács condemns Nietzsche's use of the eternal return and superman teachings to prevent democratic-socialist world hegemony. However, insofar as he shares Nietzsche's concern with moral-political things, he simply presents an opposing answer to the common sense question of how best to live. Any consistent taking seriously of that question, whether by "atheist" aristocrats (Nietzsche) or by "atheist" egalitarians (Marx), requires abandonment of atheism and pious return to Socratic attempts to answer it. Cf. above, note 22. Marx's form of jackass worship, his pious need to make atheist science serve humanity, blinded him to Nietzsche's awareness of atheist science's inherent nihilism: Zarathustra, II:8; IV:4, 15-18; Joyful Science, 125.

56. Zarathustra, III:13, II:9; Cf. Antichrist, 29-35 and Will to Power, 983.

57. Zarathustra, Prologue (1); Heidegger, *Was Heisst Denken*? pp. 28-29; Nietzsche, I, pp. 294-318.

58. Zarathustra, III:4; IV:6.

59. *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, $VIII_1$, p. 144; Zarathustra, IV:5; Will to Power, 617; Heidegger "*Wer ist Nietzsches Zarathustra*?", *Vortraege und Aufsaetze*, pp. 121-122.

60. The Use and Abuse of History for Life, 4; Joyful Science, 126.

Notes to Chapter Twenty

1. This chapter profited from arguments in my Nietzsche seminar.
2. Nietzsche, Antichrist, 17; cf. Genealogy of Morals, III, 22.
3. Nietzsche, Joyful Science, 348.
4. Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, 251.
5. Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols, VI:2; Joyful Science, 11; Zarathustra, I:4; Antichrist, 6.
6. Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols, IX:47, 39; Beyond Good and Evil, 188, 229-230, 264; Genealogy of Morals, II.
7. Nietzsche, Antichrist, 57-59.
8. Nietzsche, Dawn, 205; Beyond Good and Evil, 251.
9. Nietzsche, Zarathustra, I, 15.
10. Nietzsche, Antichrist, 25; Joyful Science, 136.
11. Nietzsche, Joyful Science, 344.
12. Nietzsche, Antichrist, 17.
13. Ibid., 16.
14. Nietzsche, Joyful Science, 143; Spinoza, Theological-Political Treatise, 2, 15, 17.
15. Nietzsche, Joyful Wisdom, 136.
16. Nietzsche, Antichrist, 27.
17. Psalm 137.
18. Nietzsche, Antichrist, 16-17; cf. Spinoza, Theological-Political Treatise, 17: "After its destruction and re-establishment, the Jewish state was a mere shadow of the first state, for the high priests had usurped the rights of the tribal military commanders."
19. Nietzsche, Antichrist, 26-27; 54-58; Beyond Good and Evil, 38; Will to Power, 481.
20. Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, 195.
21. Cf. C. Schmitt, The Concept of the Political (New York, 1976), pp. 27-36, 53-55, 69-105; Nietzsche, Will to Power, 218; Zarathustra, II:15; Plato, Republic, 335B-336A.
22. Nietzsche, Antichrist, 32.
23. Ibid., 29-31; cf. Spinoza, Theological-Political Treatise, 19: "The Christian religion was not taught at first by kings but by private persons ... among the Hebrews things were very differently arranged: for their church began at the same time as their dominion, and Moses, their monarch, taught religion to the people, arranged their sacred rites and chose their priests."
24. Nietzsche, Zarathustra, I:1; Schmitt (above, note 21) pp. 53, 98.
25. Nietzsche, Antichrist, 58; Will to Power, 765; Zarathustra, II, 20; Joyful Science, 359-370; "An Spinoza" (Musarion Edition, XX) p. 129.

38. Nietzsche, Genealogy of Morals, II, 15; Will to Power, 410; Joyful Science, 349; Strauss (above, note 29) pp. 231-238; Spinoza, Theological-Political Treatise, 16: "For instance, fish are determined by nature to swim and the big ones to eat the smaller ones and therefore fish enjoy the water and big ones eat smaller ones with supreme natural right. For it is certain that nature has supreme right to do anything she can; in other words, her right is co-extensive with her power. The power of nature is the power of god, which has supreme right over all things ... It is the supreme law and right of nature that every individual should strive to preserve itself as it is without regard to anything but itself; therefore this supreme law and right belongs to every individual ... We do not here acknowledge any difference between men and other individual natural entities nor – between fools, idiots and sane men. Whatsoever any individual does by the laws of its nature, it has a supreme right to do."

39. Nietzsche, Zarathustra, II:19; IV:2; Strauss (above, note 29) pp. 10-11.

40. Nietzsche, Zarathustra, II:13; Will to Power, 481.

41. Nietzsche, Zarathustra, I:1 and the description of the last man in Zarathustra, Preface (5) and Jesus in Antichrist, 29-35.

42. Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, 52.

Notes to Chapter Twenty-one

1. Review of A. Capuzzi's and D. Krell's translation and analysis of Heidegger's Nietzsche (Volume: 4, Nihilism).

2. J. Klein, Lectures and Essays (Annapolis, 1985) p. 54.

3. Nietzsche, Human, All Too Human, II:22.

4. Nietzsche, Kritische Gesamtausgabe, V_2, p. 401.

5. Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, p. 152.

6. K. Löwith, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, (Stuttgart, 1961) pp. 122-123.

Notes to Chapter Twenty-two

1. Gottfried Benn, Letter to Ina Seidel (September 30, 1934).

2. *I Corinthians* 1:19-23.

3. Carlos Kleiber (conductor), Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde*, Deutsche Grammophon Records 2741 006.

4. G. Sandow, Ovation (September, 1983) p. 45.

5. Nietzsche, Zarathustra, IV:5.

holds itself aloof through various reservations for the purpose of mental entertainment and enjoyment; for it does not know what is at stake in a thinker's way of thinking."

Notes to Chapter Twenty-four

1. Aristotle, On the Soul, Books II-III; Lucretius, On the Nature of Things, Book IV.

2. Plato, Republic, 511D-E; cf. A. Bloom, The Republic of Plato (New York, 1968) pp. 403-404: "The things of which we have a natural consciousness – plants, animals, artifacts, etc ... we become aware of through the senses. The faculty which apprehends them may be called trust and it is the beginning of knowledge ... Our awareness of them is not perfectly sure, but a universal doubt of them would lead us into a void; it would leave us with nothing. It is called trust precisely because it resists doubt of the existence of what it apprehends. Knowledge or philosophy is the clarification and articulation of this natural consciousness." The word (*pistis*) translated by Bloom as "trust" is translated in the New Testament as "faith." See also J. Klein, Plato's Meno (Chapel Hill, 1965) pp. 112-125; L. Strauss, Political Philosophy, edited by H. Gildin (New York, 1975) pp. 59-62, 99-129.

3. Spinoza, Theological-Political Treatise, Preface (translated by R. Elwes); cf. Bacon, New Organum, I: 63, 71, 89.

4. Spinoza, Ethics Demonstrated by Geometric Method, I (Appendix), translated by R. Elwes; Nietzsche, Joyful Science, 301.

5. Spinoza (above, note 3) Chapter XVI.

6. Hume, Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding, Section XII, part 1; Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, 16, 21-24, 34; Joyful Science, 57-59, 80, 107, 111-112.

7. Heidegger, "*Die Zeit des Weltbildes*," Holzwege (Frankfurt am Main, 1950) pp. 83-84: "Understood essentially, world view (*Weltbild*) does not mean a view of the world, but the world understood as a view (or picture). Existence as a whole is now understood in such a way that it only exists in the first place insofar as it is produced by man who perceives or produces it (durch den vorstellend-herstellenden Menschen) ... Wherever existence is not interpreted in this way, the world cannot become a view or picture; there cannot be a world-view ... The world view does not change from a formerly medieval one into a modern one, but this very thing, that the world itself becomes a view, distinguishes the essence of modernity ... [For the ancients] existence does not become existent because man perceives it in the sense of subjective perception."

8. Plato, *Theaetetus*, 161C-E, 170A-C; H. Jaffa, Equality and Liberty (New York, 1965) pp. 194-195: "The objectivity of the external world cannot be demonstrated. Most of us, usually at an early age, have had the solipsist fantasy that

Hence clearly appears what the true method ought to be like ... namely solely the knowledge of the pure understanding."

21. Spinoza (above, note 3) preface; Nietzsche, Genealogy of Morals, III, 1: "The fundamental fact about the human will, its *horror vacui*: it needs a goal – and it will sooner will nothingness than not will at all."

22. Aristotle, Metaphysics, I: 982b 25-30.

23. J.P. Sartre, No Exit (near the end): "So this is hell. I'd never have believed it. You remember all we were told about the torture chambers, the fire and brimstone, the 'burning marl.' Old wives tales! There's no need for red-hot pokers. Hell is – other people!" (translated by L. Abel).

Notes to Chapter Twenty-five

1. Nietzsche, Will to Power, 583 (c).
2. Ibid., 457.
3. Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil: 9,188.
4. Nietzsche, Will to Power, 466-469.
5. Nietzsche, Will to Power, 457; Hume, Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding, end.
6. J. Klein, Greek Mathematical Thought and the Origin of Algebra, MIT Press, 1968.
7. J. Klein, Lectures and Essays, Annapolis, 1985, pp. 38-39, 41.
8. Strauss "A Giving of Accounts", The College, April, 1970, p. 4.
9. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, I:6, 1096a 14-16.
10. J. Klein, Bulletin of St. Johns College, April, 1955, pp. 128, 131-132.
11. C. Wilson, Bulletin of St. Johns College, April, 1955, p. 128.
12. H.V. Jaffa, The Conditions of Freedom, (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1975) pp. 124-148.
13. S. Schaub, Review of E. Brann's Paradoxes of Education in a Republic in Independent Journal of Philosophy, Volume 4, p. 177.
14. Nietzsche, Human, All-Too-Human, I, 635.
15. Jaffa, "Behaviorial Science and the Hinckley Verdict," Public Research Syndicated, July 15, 1982.

Notes to Chapter Twenty-six

1. Hans-Georg Gadamer, translated and with an introduction by P. Christopher Smith, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980.

Notes to Chapter Twenty-seven

1. Indiana University Press, Bloomington and London, 1978.
2. Nietzsche, Zarathustra, I, 22-section 3.
3. Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols, VI:2; IX:47).
4. Nietzsche, Zarathustra, III:13..
5. Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, 80, 231.
6. Ibid., 238.
7. W. Kaufmann, Basic Writings of Nietzsche, New York, 1968, p. 357, note 31.
8. Below, "Nihilism at Scripps College" and Nietzsche, Joyful Science, 125)
9. Strauss, Liberalism Ancient and Modern, (New York, 1968) 223.
10. K. Kristofferson, "Me and Bobby McGee."
11. Nietzsche, Genealogy of Morals, III, 28; cf. Joyful Science 1.

Notes to Chapter Twenty-eight

1. This chapter profited from arguments in my modern freedom seminar.
2. Strauss, "Comments on Carl Schmitt's Der Begriff des Politischen:" in Spinoza's Critique of Religion (New York, 1965) pp. 332-333.
3. The Selected Letters of Flaubert, translated and edited by F. Steegmuller (New York, 1953) pp. 245, 248. Hereafter cited as "Letters".
4. Flaubert, Madame Bovary, translated by L. Blair and edited by L. Bersani (New York: Bantam Books, 1972) p. 30. All references to Madame Bovary are from this edition.
5. Ibid., p. 98.
6. I Kings, 21:1-3; cf. Goethe, Faust, II, Act 5, "The Palace" (end).
7. Madame Bovary, pp. 123-131.
8. Ibid., p. 126.
9. Ibid., p. 161.
10. Ibid., p. 113.
11. Ibid., p. 165.
12. Ibid., pp. 149-245.
13. Plato, Republic, 461D-E; Aristotle, Politics, 1262a 25-40.
14. Madame Bovary, p. 22.
15. Ibid., p. 284.
16. Ibid., p. 302.
17. Ibid., p. 302.
18. Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, Preface.

19. Flaubert, Salammbo, translated by J. Chartres and edited by F. Green (London: Everyman's Library: 1969) p. 301. All references to Salammbo are from this edition which also includes Sainte-Beuve's criticism of Salammbo and Flaubert's reply. References to the criticism are cited as "Sainte- Beuve" and to Flaubert's reply as "Flaubert".
20. Flaubert, p. 316.
21. Madame Bovary, p. 165.
22. Salammbo, pp. 61-72, 155, 185, 270.
23. Madame Bovary, p. 146.
24. *Martin Heidegger zum 80. Geburtstag von seiner Heimatstadt Messkirch* (Frankfurt am Main, 1969).
25. Salammbo, p. 83.
26. Sainte-Beuve, pp. 305-306, 297.
27. Flaubert, p. 315.
28. Sainte-Beuve, p. 296; cf. Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols, IX:3.
29. Salammbo, p. 117.
30. Ibid., pp. 95-96, 222-228.
31. Ibid., pp. 123-124.
32. Ibid., p. 124.
33. Ibid., p. 108.
34. Flaubert, p. 315.
35. Salammbo, p. 77.
36. Ibid., p. 155.
37. Ibid., p. 210.
38. Ibid., pp. 230-231.
39. Ibid., p. 155.
40. Ibid., pp. 155, 228-236.
41. Ibid., pp. 9-13.
42. Aristotle, Politics 1269a 12-1270a 15; Plato, Republic 548A-B.
43. Salammbo, p. 273.
44. Ibid., p. 278.
45. Ibid., p. 230. Cf. Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, 239.
46. Sainte-Beuve, p. 301.
47. Flaubert, pp. 317-319.
48 Rousseau, Has the Restoration of the Sciences and Arts Tended to Purify or Corrupt Morals?; Social Contract, IV, 8.
49. Letters, p. 244.

Notes to Chapter Twenty-nine

1. These comments were prepared for a conference, "The Ambiguous Legacy of the Enlightenment", sponsored by the Claremont Institute for Statesmanship and Political Philosophy and the Henry Salvatori Center for the Study of Freedom in the Modern World (Reprinted here with permission). The comments will be on a panel ("Modern Ideology and the Enlightenment") scheduled for January 27, 1990, the one hundred and thirty-first birthday of Kaiser Wilhelm II, the last ruler of what Gottfried Benn, in his 1934 defense of German expressionism, called "*das grosse wunderbare glück-und freiheitsdurchrauschte Deutschland.*"

2. Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols, IX:32.

3. G. Niemeyer, "Enlightenment to Ideology," Paper delivered at the conference)"The Ambiguous Legacy of the Enlightenment").

4. Nietzsche, Joyful Science, 344.

5. Nietzsche, Will to Power, 583-C.

6. G. Niemeyer, (above, note 3).

7. Ibid. In his Political Theology, Schmitt rightly insists that without theology, there can be no morality and without morality, there can be no politics.

8. Dostoyevsky, Notes from the Underground, 8-9.

Notes to Chapter Thirty

1. Shadia B. Drury, The Political Ideas of Leo Strauss (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1990).

2. Drury, ibid., p. 128. Like all of Schmitt's pseudo-liberal critics (e.g., Karl Löwith) Drury does not perceive that he is primarily a political theologian (and that "political theologian" is as much a tautology as "political philosopher"). Inability to grasp the necessary relation of theology and politics (or philosophy and politics) is responsible for this error. Unlike Schmitt, Drury is a defective theologian because she fails to see that she, like all non-philosophic political men, is a theologian.

In the moral-political arena, the main fight is between theologians and philosophers: "No one can be both a philosopher and a theologian, nor, for that matter, some possibility which transcends the conflict between philosophy and theology, or pretends to be a synthesis of both. But every one of us can be and ought to be either one or the other" (Strauss, The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism, Chicago, 1989, p. 270).

Philosophy and theology spearhead mankind's futile flight from reason and science (liberalism), from realization of Bukharin's black emptiness: Error is not blindness, error is cowardice!

What science reveals as flight from reality, is, for Strauss, Western Civilization's heart – the fight between reason and revelation, philosophy and politics. Since nihilism (nothing) is the only alternative to Western Civilization, Strauss rightly insisted that nothing – and only nothing! – transcends the conflict between theology and philosophy. It surely is not transcended by pseudo-liberal, academic inanities about Western Civilization's narrowness and provincialism, the demand that colleges be open to the teachings of non-western civilizations. The only transcendence of Western Civilization, the only non-Western teaching, is the nihilism driving Bukharin to communism and Hess to nazism (cf. above, chapter 15, pp. 131-132. The decline of the West is the decline of mankind, its reduction to nothing!

That decline and reduction is exemplified in Drury's oblivion of the war between theology (Schmitt) and philosophy (Strauss), her reduction of it to a nihilist (machiavellian) "autonomy of politics from morality." Like all pseudo-liberals, she cheerfully presents her nihilism as a service to decent morality and politics. To paraphrase Strauss' more charitable characterization: Pseudo-liberals fiddle while Rome burns ... They do not know that they fiddle and they do not know that Rome burns. Liberals do not fiddle; they know that Rome burns, has always burned and will always burn!

3. Drury, ibid., p. 105.
4. Strauss, "A Giving of Accounts," The College (April, 1970) p. 4.
5. Drury, ibid., pp. 201; 204 (note 7)
6. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, 1141b3-10, 1145a6-14.

Notes to Chapter Thirty-one

1. H.V. Jaffa, "The Reichstag is Still Burning: The Failure of Higher Education and the Decline of the West" (Claremont Institute for the Study of Statesmanship and the Natural Law, 1989) pp. 24-25.
2. Ibid., pp. 50-51.
3. J. Dutuard, The Taxis of the Marne, (New York, 1957) p. 54.

Notes to Chapter Thirty-two

1. Apocalypse, 3:15-17.

Notes to Chapter Thirty-three

1. "Philosophical Autobiography," The Philosophy of Karl Jaspers, Second Edition (La Salle, 1981) pp. 75 (5, 8-9).

2. Nietzsche, *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, edited by Colli and Montinari, (Berlin, 1967 ff.) III_3, p. 172.

Notes to Chapter Thirty-five

1. L. Carroll, The Hunting of the Snark (Fit the First).

2. E. von Salomon, *Die Kadetten* (Rowohlt paperback, 1968) p. 36: "*Das Schönste in Leben, das wäre, als zwanzigjähriger Leutnant in einen Strassengraben vor Paris zu verrecken.*" Salomon asked this question of his brother around 1913 when he was an eleven year old Prussian cadet and his brother a thirteen year old one.

In *Der Fragebogen* (Rowohlt, 1952, p. 634), Salomon recounts one of the last infantry fights of World War II. It reminded me of that wonderful Polish cavalry charge (against German tanks) at the beginning of the war. Salomon recounts his unsuccessful effort to dissuade a twenty year old lieutenant of infantry from leading his decimated platoon on a suicidal attack (in April, 1945) against American tanks. The lieutenant thanked him for his obvious concern, but refused to disobey the order to attack – "for we are after all German infantry!" (" – *aber, wir sind eben deutsche Infanterie!*"). Something of the beauty of Verdun was alive in this Polish and German desperation.